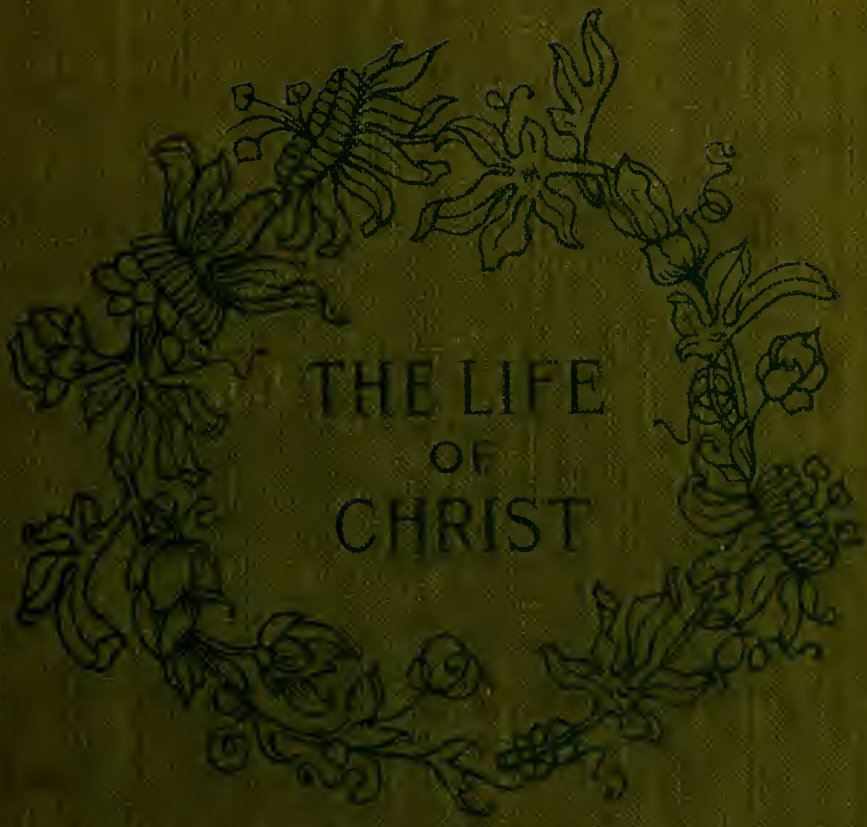

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

REV. LYMAN ABBOTT, D.D.

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BY

THE REV. LYMAN ABBOTT, D.D.

AN AID TO THE STUDY

OF

THE GOSPEL HISTORY OF JESUS CHRIST

THE BIBLE STUDY PUBLISHING CO.,
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Contents.

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Publisher's Preface

One of the fundamental principles of The Bible Study Union is that Sunday-school lesson helps should never be of such a character as to take the place of the personal study of the Bible itself in the preparation of the lesson. The tendency of helps which do this is to drive the Bible out of the Sunday-school, and to make the opinions of men about the Bible, rather than the Bible itself, the basis of instruction. One evil result of such helps appears in the practical disuse of the Bible in many Sunday-school classes at the present time. For use in the Sunday-school, the Bible without note or comment is much better than the best possible notes and comments without the Bible.

It is equally true, as stated by the author of The Bible Study Union Lessons in The Andover Review for October, 1892, that "we need all the help we can get in studying the Bible; we cannot have too much of it, provided it is *really* help;" that is, if it is of such a character that it helps to a better understanding of the sacred text, but does not take the place of that text as the basis of study. Much such help can be gathered from historical and geographical works, from commentaries on the gospels, and from the various lives of Christ, of which we now have such rich abundance. The Manual, published in connection with The Bible Study Union Lessons, is designed to afford a large measure of such help.

It is because the accompanying Life of Christ, by Dr. Abbott, is of this character that we gladly republish it from the columns of The Outlook as revised by himself, for use in connection with the lessons on The Gospel History of Jesus Christ. It is very comprehensive and suggestive, and throws much light on many points in the history of our Lord. Dr. Abbott has especial

fitness for the preparation of such a work. He has already written one Life of Christ, which has commanded an extensive sale; has prepared excellent popular commentaries on each of the gospels; and has written several series of comments on the International Lessons from the gospels, in The Christian Union, now called The Outlook. The present work, though based on the outline of the Life of Christ as found in The Bible Study Union course, is really the treasure-house into which he has gathered the results of his long-continued studies on this most important subject. It cannot fail to be very useful to any who wish for a better understanding of the life of our Lord, and especially to those who study it in the lessons of The Bible Study Union.

We wish particularly to call attention to Dr. Abbott's statement in his preface, that he alone is responsible for any views which he may express in this volume. We do this in justice to the author and to the editor of the lessons, and to the Lesson Committee of The Bible Study Union.

THE BIBLE STUDY PUBLISHING CO.

BOSTON, September, 1894.

Author's Preface

This is not, properly speaking, a Life of Christ. During the last half-century many such Lives have been written, from a great variety of points of view and with widely different characteristics. Not to go beyond the more popular and better known, and those which treat the theme in the spirit of a thoroughly Christian faith, the lay student of the Bible will find valuable aid to his study of the Gospels in *Stalker*, an admirable compend; *Farrar*, imaginative, emotive, and pictorial; *Edersheim*, a treasure-house of information concerning Jewish life and literature; *Geikie*, not less scholarly in its presentation of Greek and Roman contemporaneous life; *Weiss*, thoughtful, suggestive, reverent, though to the English mind somewhat free in its dealing with some debatable questions; *Andrews*, the best extant book of reference on questions chronological and topographical. From these and other kindred sources I have freely drawn in these papers, without attempting to rival or compete with them.

For a number of years I have prepared a paper for "The Outlook" (formerly "The Christian Union") on the subject of the International Sunday-school Lessons. This year the International Committee chose as their theme the Life of Christ. A comparison of their selected Scripture with that of The Bible Study Union made it quite evident that the course selected by the latter Committee was much the more complete and comprehensive. I therefore adopted the latter as the basis for my Biblical articles this year. Like their predecessors, these papers assume that the reader has access to other sources of information — in commentaries, in the various Lives of Christ, and in the Quarterlies and Manuals especially prepared for Sunday-school teachers' use. Assuming some

prior study of the Scripture lesson with such scholarly aids, the object of these papers is synthetic rather than analytic; it is to present in a single picture the incident or teaching suggested for our contemplation, and to suggest, not all the lessons that may be drawn from it, but that lesson which is most central and is at once most upon the surface and most at the heart of the narrative. In brief, the object of these papers is not so much to add to the reader's knowledge of the facts as to increase his appreciation of the spirit of the Gospel narrative.

Two remarks ought perhaps to be added: First, that neither The Bible Study Union Committee nor the authors or editors of its lessons are in any way responsible for the views embodied in or supposed to be implied by these papers. The papers do not pass under the eye of that Committee, or any member of it, prior to publication, but are reprinted, without revision, except my own, from the pages of "The Outlook." Second, that they are written by one who believes heartily and sincerely in what is infelicitously termed "the supernatural." My whole religious faith is founded on and vivified by my faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of mankind. It is because I have this faith, and desire to impart it to and strengthen it in others, that these papers are written. It is also proper to add that in the preparation of these papers I have felt free to make use, without direct reference or quotation, of my "Jesus of Nazareth" (Harper & Brothers), and of a series of sermons preached in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, in the winter of 1888–89, and published in the "Christian World Pulpit" of London.

LYMAN ABBOTT.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., July, 1894.

The Life of Christ

CHAPTER I.—INTRODUCTORY: THE DIVINE CHRIST

John i., 1–18; Luke i., 26–38

Before taking up the life of Christ, it is desirable that the student should clearly understand why he is studying that life. I believe it is because that life answers the two profoundest questions which any one ever has to ask himself: First, What is man? Secondly, Who is God?

1. What is man? Before it is possible for one to accomplish anything, he must form some plan according to which he will work. Some ideal is a necessary prerequisite to any achievement. What will I make of myself? Before I can answer this question I must ask and answer another: What is true manhood? What ought I to wish to be? This is the first and most fundamental question of religion. Not, Is there a God? Not, Is there a salvation from sin? But, Is there any ideal to which man may aspire, to which also he may patiently and hopefully direct his endeavors? For until this question is answered, he cannot answer the others. He cannot know what sin is until he has known what is the ideal, falling away from which constitutes sin. He cannot know whether there is a God who has anything to do with him until he knows something about himself.

This first and fundamental question Jesus Christ answers. What is human nature? The Gospel replies: Jesus Christ is the embodiment of true human nature; whoever fails to come up to the standard of Jesus Christ fails to come up to the standard of a true manhood. Depravity is not

natural, but, as Horace Bushnell has well said, unnatural, contra-natural. It is the true nature of man to be a child of God, and what is meant by a child of God the life and character of Jesus Christ declare to us. We are to follow him because he is the ideal of humanity; we are to study him that we may know what that ideal is. It is one of the remarkable features of his life and character that he has historically furnished an ideal for so great a variety of individuals—for the ancient and for the modern; for the Occidental and for the Oriental; for the philosopher and for the laborer; for the soldier, the statesman, the poet, the preacher, the workingman; for man and for woman. Augustine and Luther in the pulpit, Havelock and Howard in the camp, William of Orange and Gladstone in the statesman's office, Florence Nightingale and Clara Barton in the hospital, the merchant in his counting-room and the mother at her cradle, have all found the ideal for their life, the pattern for their imitation, in Jesus Christ.

Not, indeed, in following even him in any exact and servile imitation, not in trying to do the things he did in the way in which he did them, not in being an itinerant minister, or indeed a minister at all, because he was a preacher without a settled home—not thus do we follow him. If this were following Christ, he could be a model for only the few. We follow him when we learn what his spirit was, and are inspired by that spirit ourselves; when we show in our lives the patience, the courage, the long-suffering love which he showed in his, and solve the problems of our day and generation by applying to them the principles which he inculcated and applied. This must be our first duty, and this our first desire, in studying the life of Jesus Christ—to see what life may mean, and ought to mean to us.

2. The other great question I believe he also answers—Who is God?

The preface to John's Gospel is the fitting preface to our study of this incomparable life. God has always been a Word. That is, he has always been a speaking, self-manifesting, self-revealing God. God is love; and love always, and by the very necessity of its nature, puts forth life for the sake of others. God has thus always been manifesting himself in nature, in poets and prophets,

in heroes known and unknown. Especially has he manifested himself in and through the one chosen people of Israel, whose genius fitted them for the special manifestation of divine righteousness. At last, when the preparatory work was done, and the fullness of time had come, he manifested himself in one unique and transcendent human life. The Word which had always been speaking of the divine glory "was made flesh and dwelt among us."

In Jesus Christ God and man are reconciled. Not as by some extraneous act done for both God and man by some third person; they are reconciled in Jesus Christ primarily because Jesus Christ is a true man, and the true man always is and must be divine; because, on the other hand, Jesus Christ is the supremest manifestation of God to man, and that supremest manifestation can be no otherwise than in a human life. We study, then, the life of Christ that we may understand the life of God. What Jesus Christ was in the three short years of his public ministry, that God is in his infinite and eternal relations to the children of men. Jesus Christ is God adumbrated that we may look upon him. He is the image of God made finite that we may comprehend him. He is not the manifestation of one phase of God, as of his mercy, with another phase—his wrath—to come by and by; he is the manifestation of the whole moral attributes and qualities of the infinite, the eternal, and the otherwise unknown. Therefore it is that through him we have access to the Father. When we look above us or about us or within us, and wonder who is He that made the world, that rules mankind, that inspires the individual soul, the answer is always the same: He is such an one as Jesus Christ was, for Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh.

We study, then, this life of Christ, in the second place, that we may know who God is. What Paul declared to the Athenians, that this life still declares to us: "Whom ye without understanding worship, him declare I unto you." I ask the readers of these papers, as they read them, and as they read with care the successive passages of Scripture upon which these papers are founded, always to ask themselves these two questions: What is man? and Who is God? and for the answer to these questions look to this unique and incomparable life.

CHAPTER II.—THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

Luke ii., 1–20

It must be conceded by the candid student of the Bible that the story of the miraculous birth of Jesus is not as well authenticated as the story of his resurrection, and that the same importance is not attached to it by the sacred writers. Two only of the Gospel narrators mention his birth. It is never referred to by Christ himself in any of his reported discourses, and it is never directly referred to in any of the evangelical missionary sermons recorded in the Book of Acts, nor in any of the Apostolic epistles. It is not strange, therefore, that devout and reverential men have doubted the truth of this story; and certainly it would be a mistake to attach to this supernatural birth the same importance that is attached to the resurrection. For the latter is the foundation of historical Christianity, and is made so by the prominence given to it both in the evangelical narratives and in the discourses and epistles of the Apostolic writers. At the same time the candid objector must also recognize the fact that his real objection to this narrative is that it introduces into history so much of what is termed the supernatural. It is because the event is extraordinary, because it cannot be accounted for on naturalistic principles, because dreams and angelic visions are unknown in our time, or at least discredited, that this chapter in the life of Christ, with its accompanying "overture of angels," as it has been beautifully termed by Henry Ward Beecher, is looked upon with doubt by the skeptical mind. Now, these papers on the life of Christ are written, as I have already said, from the point of view of one who believes in the supernatural, and it would be idle to attempt in a parenthetical paragraph to maintain against objectors this point of view. It must suffice here to say that I believe that God is in nature and in

human life, and that in Jesus the Christ he entered into one unique human life in order to reveal himself to mankind; and it does not seem strange to me that such an entrance should be unique. I believe that angelic spirits and the sainted dead are not far removed from us, but all about us; it does not, therefore, seem strange to me that some vision should be afforded of their presence in the birth-hour of the Son of God. The method of the divine incarnation and the simplicity of the Gospel narrative both of Matthew and of Luke seem to me inconsistent with the idea that these narratives are either mythical additions or the creations of a wonder-working fancy. Let the reader, then, whatever may be his philosophical predilections, try for a moment to take this point of view, and, with this faith in the supernatural as a present and perpetual reality, read the simple story of Jesus's birth.

A peasant youth and maiden are betrothed. The man a carpenter by trade, a Nazarene by residence, an upright but cautious if not timid soul, of little repute in his community, and belonging to the poorest of the peasantry; the maiden a woman of quick impulses and resolute will, devout, God-fearing, familiar with the Scriptures of her people, and possessing a patient, heroic mother-love, which has made her a true type of womanhood and motherhood throughout the ages.[1] Both youth and maiden live in the hope of the coming of that Messiah who was to redeem Israel from its bondage and re-establish the kingdom of God upon the earth. They live in an age when angelic visitations seemed not incredible. To her, as yet uumarried, comes from an angel the annunciation of her motherhood, and that the child to whom she should give birth should be the long-waited-for Messiah. Only a mother can at all conceive what this angel message meant to Mary. Only a mother can at all realize how sublimely simple was the faith which, despite the certainty that the fulfillment of this message would subject her to darkest and cruelest suspicion, received it with the quiet and accepting faith: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."

Lemon A.

[1] For Scripture references justifying these conclusions respecting the character of Joseph and Mary, see (Joseph): Luke ii., 24; Matthew i., 19-24; ii., 14-21, 22; John vi., 42. (Mary): Luke i., 39; Mark iii., 21-31; John xix., 25; Luke i., 38; ii., 19-51; i., 46-55.

With a different sort of faith, less profound, less truly comprehending the deep significance of the hour, did the shepherds on the plain receive the message which came to them. One can imagine them half-dozing on the hillside and startled by the sudden appearance of a messenger, who comes they know not whence, with a strange light in his garments which gives them a sense of the supernal. But stranger than the apparition is the message of the unknown. This is not merely that the Messiah is born, but that the evidence of his Messiahship is that they shall find the babe lying in a manger. We may be quite certain that they did not understand the significance of that message then, since its significance has hardly been understood even now. The sign which was to attest the Messiah was his lowliness. The evidence of his divinity was the degree of his self-abasement. Love enters life at the very bottom and takes upon itself the hardest conditions. Since the Messiah came to minister, not to be ministered unto, since he came to proclaim as a Gospel message, It is more blessed to give than to receive, since he came to reveal a God whose whole nature is summed up in the one word love, since he came to be a divine sacrifice, not a receiver of sacrifices from mankind, the sign of his Messiahship was the lowliness of the home in which he was installed.

By a different messenger God intimated the Gospel of his Son to the pagan world. Whether from ancient Hebrew prophecies borne into the East, or from their own native discontent with existing conditions, or from prophetic words uttered by pagan prophets, it is not, perhaps, easy to determine, but certain it is that Eastern nations had an expectation of a deliverer whose coming should revolutionize the world.[1] Among the devout souls of the East none were more devout than the disciples of Zoroaster. It is not improbable that the remarkable conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn which occurred at this time first attracted their attention and led three of the Magi of Persia to travel westward in search of the Messiah whose birth they believed this conjunction had presaged. Thus, in the very hour of the Messiah's birth, witness was borne

[1] See my "Jesus of Nazareth," p. 71.

to the double truth that Nature rightly studied leads to Christ, and that

> God, whose love is broader
> Than the measures of man's mind,

gives the message of his mercy to pagan nations by methods which pagan nations are able to receive.

But the reception of the Messiah was not all with wondering and welcoming faith. In the vain attempt to put the infant King of Israel to death, by the slaughter of the Hebrew children, was presaged, even in the earliest months of his life, the hostility which the Christ was to encounter, and which was to bring him to a seemingly untimely death; and which, in all the subsequent history of the Church, was to do battle against him and his cause —a witness that goodness is not a natural and simple growth under favoring skies, but a fight of faith against willful, determined, and murderous opposition.

With this simple grouping together of these events, I must leave the student to meditate on the significance of these varied receptions of Israel's King: By the receptive Mother; by the wondering shepherds; by the seeking Magi; and by the hostile Herod.

CHAPTER III.—THE EDUCATION OF JESUS

Matthew, chapter ii.; Luke ii., 21-52

Science, which endeavors to explain everything by that which is seen and understood, offers two explanations to account for the mystery of character: one, inheritance; the other, environment. These two are insufficient to account for the character of Jesus the Christ. We know comparatively little, it is true, of either Joseph or Mary—what little we do know has been indicated in Chapter II.—but we know this: that nothing remarkable appears in the character of Joseph; and although Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a remarkable woman, there is nothing in her character adequate to account for that of her son. She clearly had no conception of his mission. Believing him to be a prophet, she was anxious to have him inaugurate his ministry by a miracle. Finding him threatened by a conflict with the Pharisees, she feared that his zeal was running into fanaticism, and, with her other children, tried to break through the crowd that was about him and get him away, but tried in vain. This is not a case in which the genius of the father or mother accounts for that of the son. Nor do we find in his ancestry any indications of extraordinary spiritual genius. Two genealogies of him are given, but we do not find in either of them any hint of the future greatness of the child. We look in vain in the records of these names for any of the great prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah; in vain for any of the great reforming kings—Jehoshaphat, Josiah, Hezekiah. The only great name in the genealogy is that of David. With that solitary exception, the names are those of persons otherwise almost wholly unknown.

There is as little in the environment of the child to account for his character. The Gospels, indeed, give us but one incident of his youth, but from other sources we are able to form a tolerable picture of the influences under

which his childhood was spent. The house, built of sun-dried brick and thatched with straw, contained probably but a single room, which served for kitchen, bedroom, sitting-room, and workshop. If the weather permitted, the house-wife built a sort of camp-fire outside for cooking. There was neither chimney nor window; the light came in through the door, or through a slit in the wall made narrow so as to exclude the rain. Art and literature were unknown. A literal interpretation of the command, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image," prevented all art except such as was contained in geometrical or arabesque patterns. The only literature the house could have contained would have been some fragment of the Bible, or the commentary of some scribe thereon. The devout Puritan would sooner have allowed the literature of Voltaire and Rousseau in his home than the devout Jew would have permitted that of Greece or Rome. The only evening illumination came from a smoking lamp put upon a bushel turned upside down to serve as a light-stand, and in the daytime the house was so dark that if the house-wife lost a coin she must light a candle to search for it. The only school was one connected with the village synagogue, and here probably Jesus learned to read, using the Old Testament Scriptures as his reader. Possibly he also learned a little arithmetic. Science was unknown, and writing was done by scribes who carried their ink-stand and parchment with them, and could be hired for a small coin to do one's writing for one. Only once did Jesus go to a school where the higher education was taught. This was in Jerusalem, whose temple was surrounded with the booths of men learned in the law, and which was thus at once temple and university. The boy was but twelve years of age, but he was attracted, not by the barbaric splendor of the temple, the magnificence of the music, or the great processions, but by this one opportunity of his life to learn something more than his synagogue teacher, or even his pious mother, could teach him. He strayed from his parents into the class-rooms of this university to ask questions, not, as tradition has sometimes represented, pertly teaching the doctors, but seriously inquiring that he might learn what he hoped they might communicate. Three days at this university was all the higher education he ever

had. Then his parents came back for him, and he was carried away to work again at his father's bench.

There was as little, too, in the general atmosphere of the age as in the special instructions of the school and the family to minister to such a character as that of Jesus. There were three great schools of thought, but from neither could he have learned much save as he reacted against them: the Essenes, the hermits, monks, of the first century, who, believing that the world was wrong, withdrew from the world; the Sadducees, the materialists and unbelievers of the first century, who had no faith in anything except success, and considered no price too great to pay for it; and the Pharisees, the Puritans of the first century, who believed in righteousness and in God, but in a God who enforced righteousness by external enactments, and in a righteousness which consisted in formal obedience to those enactments, down to the minutest particulars. Not from the Essenes, the ascetics of the first century, did Jesus learn to mix with men; not from the Sadducees that God is our Father and heaven our home; not from the Pharisees the law of liberty; not from all three combined (who worshiped only Judaism and abhorred all else) did he learn the two great lessons of his ministry—the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

How little either inheritance or environment did for Jesus those who are least willing to recognize any supernatural element in life freely acknowledge.

> The historical conditions amid which he [Jesus] appeared do not adequately explain how he became the teacher of a better form of religion than that in which he had been educated, and how he created a new epoch in the history of religion. These conditions were substantially the same, so far as we can discern, for multitudes of his contemporaries; but he alone of all these multitudes showed any fitness for this enterprise. The fact can be explained logically only by falling back on the hypothesis that he was a great religious genius, or by crediting him with a great personal endowment and native force of character. Of no man in history could it less be said than of him that he was the creature of his age; and as little could it be said of that period of time that it would have been much the same and have formed a turning-point in religious history had he not appeared.[1]

[1] "Natural History of the Christian Religion," by Dr. William MacIntosh (p. 73).

So says Dr. William MacIntosh in his "Natural History of the Christian Religion," which is an endeavor to account for Christianity on naturalistic principles. More briefly, and therefore more effectively, Henry Ward Beecher has said the same thing: "Only the lower natures are formed by external circumstances. Great natures are freely developed by forces from within."

This "personal endowment and native force of character," this "great religious genius," this "force from within," is the element in human life which science may recognize but can never accurately measure, because it is the divine element. Let it be freely recognized that times produce men. It must also be freely recognized that men produce times. If Luther is a product of the Reformation, the Reformation is also a product of Luther. If Shakespeare is a product of England, England is also a product of Shakespeare. The geniuses which flash upon the world at certain epochs, sometimes revolutionizing the world's thought and sometimes leading it gently and skillfully on in steady development, are not to be accounted for by either inheritance or environment. They are the prophets and messengers of God; in them the divine voice speaks. All true genius has a supernatural, or, if the reader prefers, a superhuman, element in it. Genius is inspiration. I will leave to others of subtler intellect to make nice discriminations between the inspiration of the Hebrews and that of other people. To me God is always in his world, and the unknown element in human character is not more than the known, but more evidently than the known, a divine element. That the genius, the inspiration, the divinity of Jesus Christ worked in a human soul, molded in the first century as that soul would not have been molded in the nineteenth, and subject to limitations in the first century which would have been different in the nineteenth, need not be questioned. Enough to point out that Jesus was what he was, not made so by qualities inherited from the mother, nor by influences wrought by the education of his youth, either formal or general, but by that force from within which is God.

CHAPTER IV.—JOHN THE BAPTIST

Luke i., 5–25, 57–80; iii., 1–18; Matthew iii., 1–12; John i., 19–36

In the history of religion two very distinct and somewhat antagonistic tendencies have been observable. One class of minds are inclined to look at life from the standpoint of God, the other class of minds from the standpoint of man. If this statement seems vague, let the reader consider its meaning from the illustrations which follow. Both classes of religious teachers have in mind the same great end, namely, bringing the soul of man into fellowship and unity with God. But they approach this problem of the spiritual life from different directions and in a different spirit. The one class seek to bring God down to man; they undertake to mediate between God and man. In theology they are Calvinistic or Augustinian, and their endeavor is as teachers to reveal the character and law and government of God. In church life they are ecclesiastical; they become priests and sacramentarians through the temple, the altar, the sacrifice; they seek to bring the divine life into the souls of men. This class is in danger of overexalting the symbol, though sometimes that symbol is a ceremonial and sometimes it is a creed. To believe the creed or to accept the ceremonial is the condition of receiving the divine life.

The other school approaches the same problem, but from the other direction. They attempt to lift man up to God; their fundamental doctrine is that God is a righteous person, and that it is possible for man to become at one with God only by becoming a righteous person. They dwell, therefore, chiefly on law and duty, they put little stress on creeds and ceremonies, and even in time abolish them altogether. In theology they are Arminian, holding in philosophy to the freedom of the will, and in religion to the possibility and the necessity of fulfilling the laws of righteousness. They are preachers, rarely or never priests.

If the necessity of their profession makes them both priests and preachers, the latter function is the one which seems of first importance to them. The pulpit is more than the altar ; the sermon is more than the sacrifice. The danger into which this school is liable to fall is that of making religion a merely ethical system, of making righteousness a series of laws external to man, of making obedience formal rather than spiritual, and, perhaps chief danger of all, of spurring men on to great endeavor withour equipping them with commensurate spiritual endowment.

Both of these tendencies are clearly discernible in Old Testament history. One is seen in the priesthood, the other in the prophetic order. The priesthood laid stress on the temple, the feasts, the ceremonies, the sacrifices. Their notion of religion comes to its culmination in the Book of Leviticus, which modern criticism has shown to be the product of a post-Mosaic age, the ripened result of a priestly system which had been in operation for centuries. The prophetic order, on the other hand, attached little value to sacrifices and ceremonies, and sometimes scouted them altogether. The spirit of this order is well interpreted in the first chapter of Isaiah, a prophet whose temper somewhat resembles that of Martin Luther. Occasionally a great genius arises, like the second Isaiah, who combines both messages in one, laying all the stress which the prophets have laid on the necessity of righteousness and character, and all the stress which the priests have laid on the inflowing of a divine life into the souls of men.

To this order of prophets—that is, to this class of minds, for the prophets were not an ecclesiastical order—belonged John the Baptizer, the second cousin of Jesus. His appearance recalled that of Elijah, whom he resembled alike in the suddenness of his public apparition, in the sternness of his message, in his simple habits, and in his uncouth appearance. He wore a rough garment of camel's hair about his person, and lived for the most part on the locusts which even to this day are caught and ground up, serving the poorest class of peasants with a substitute for flour, and on wild honey, which was often found in the crevices of the rocks and in holes in the trees. He had been educated, probably, for the priesthood, to which his father belonged, but, disgusted with the corruptions of the

Church, like Luther, he had come out from it. His message was a repetition of that of the first Isaiah, of the prophet Amos, and of the prophet Micah. In the intensity of his zeal, the sincerity of his speech, and the unfeigned horror of a righteous conscience against the formal and fictitious religion, he had all the strength of the ancient prophets. His message was like this: What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? When the multitude thronged about him, attracted by his rugged features and yet more rugged preaching, he told them that they were not to think themselves better than the pagans because they were children of Abraham; God could raise up out of the stones children of Abraham more amenable to the divine influence than they were. When a delegation from the Sanhedrim came down to inquire into his ministry, he repudiated all other authority than that which the mere truth of his utterance possessed; but when the people, stirred by his words, desired to know what they should do to flee from the wrath which he prophesied, he had at first no other message to give them than that of the first Isaiah, "Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes." He had no message for them of divine help.[1] In this respect his preaching was a preparation for the more hopeful and inspiring message of the Christ. He seems, however, to have prepared himself by his preaching for that better message. Before Christ's baptism he was a preacher of the law; after Christ's baptism he became a preacher of the Gospel.[2] If, as is probable, his preaching, recorded in John's Gospel, occurred about the Day of Atonement, his figure, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," could not have been misunderstood by the people. Both he and his auditors must have had in mind the scapegoat on which the sins of the people were symbolically laid on the great Day of Atonement, and by which they were borne off into the wilderness to be known no more.[3] Thus John the Baptizer is the last preacher of the law and the first herald of the Gospel, and therefore greater than the greatest in the history of the past, yet less than the least in the Church of the future.[4]

[1] Luke iii., 10-14.
[2] See John i., 29-36.
[3] Leviticus, chapter xvi.
[4] Matthew xi., 11.

CHAPTER V.—THE BEGINNING OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY

Matthew iii., 13–17; iv., 1–11; Mark i., 1–11

The spirit and method of Jesus, as he afterwards said publicly, radically differed from those of his cousin John the Baptizer, but their great end was the same—a spiritual reformation founded on righteousness and inspired by faith in God. When, therefore, Jesus emerged from the obscurity in which he had been living to enter upon his work, his first act was to seek out his cousin John and identify himself with this already perilously discredited teacher. He connected his work, which was so soon to supersede that of his predecessor, with the work that was to be superseded by insisting that John should baptize him, by selecting his first disciples from those of his cousin John, and by allowing, if he did not encourage, them to continue the ceremony of baptism. Caution might well have counseled Jesus to begin his new movement without entangling alliances with what had gone before. Conscience might have re-enforced the argument of caution. Can John's method, it would have asked, save the world? "No," Jesus would have said. "The man who shuts himself out from the world can never reform it. John comes neither eating nor drinking. I shall come eating and drinking." Do you believe that his demand of repentance is sufficient to save the world? "No," Jesus would have said, "repentance is not sufficient; there must be faith—faith in God, unity with God, receiving life from God—or the soul will fail to fulfill its own dream of righteousness." Nevertheless Jesus identified himself with John, for John had raised a great moral issue—on the one side corruption and a spurious religion, on the other an earnest though ineffectual protest against it; and Jesus began his ministry by identifying himself with the protestants and so repeating the challenge of John to the forces already arrayed against

righteousness. The baptism of Jesus was like the act of Luther when he flung the papal bull into the flames in the market-place at Wittenberg.

From his baptism, from this open and public confession of his faith in righteousness, this open and public challenge to unrighteousness, he went up into the wilderness to ponder on his future life, and by meditation and prayer, with wrestling, to prepare for it. What shall his life be? How shall he meet its problems? How shall he deal with its questions as they confront him? Forty days he pondered these questions, eating little—probably nothing more than he could gather of the wild honey from the rocks, or the locusts, the wilderness food of his cousin John. One wonders what went on in those forty days of soul-questioning, in which all life lay dimly outlined before him. The questioning over, the devil came to him to tempt him—not, we may be sure, as art has sometimes represented him, with horns and hoofs. A devil with horns and hoofs is no devil. Who would not say to such an one, "Get thee behind me, Satan"? He came to Christ as he comes to us, robed as an angel of light, with cunningly devised suggestions, the evil of which only the clear spiritual insight of a soul wholly consecrated to God's service could detect.

He was hungry. Command these stones that they may be made bread: why not? Because he had come into life that he might be subject to human conditions, and to use his supernatural power for himself was to violate the very condition of his incarnation. But more than that is involved in this temptation and in Christ's reply. For this suggestion was that he should minister to the desires rather than to the deeper needs of men. What men desire is bread—that which ministers to the bodily ease and comfort; in brief, civilization. Speak, said the tempter, and let the streams give forth their gold, and the rocks their coal, and the prairies their bountiful harvest, and let all the mountain streams run leaping down the mountains and turn the busy wheel of industry, give men food for the stomach and occupation for the ear and the eye, and men shall rise up and call thee blessed. "No," Christ replies, "it is not bread alone which man needs; but every manifestation and revelation of God. I will not seek the way

to men by their animal nature. I will touch them in the brain, in the heart, in the spirit. I will seek my way, though it be long and dreary, to my kingdom by lifting men above the earth and the earthly." Christianity is not civilization, and does not come through civilization. Christianity first; civilization afterwards. The ministry to the spirit first; the ministry to the body subsequently.

Then comes the second suggestion. Stand in imagination on the loftiest pinnacle of the lofty temple. Behold the priests joyful in the courts below and the city thronged with multitudes gathered on this festal day. Now fling thyself down from this pinnacle; be borne up in angel hands; let not thy foot dash against a stone; so, by appealing to men's wonder and admiration, win thy victory by one great successful exhibition. How often in the history of the Church has this temptation been repeated! What mean these great cathedrals, these magnificent processions, this sumptuous religion, these insignia of ecclesiastical power; what these sermons striving to stir men by pictures of an imagined heaven and an imagined hell, except this—that the Church has yielded to the temptation to make quick passage to a kingdom of God by exciting men to fear and admire God rather than by inspiring them to love him? Not so will Christ win his way to the world's homage. He cares not for bowing heads and bended knees; only for loyal hearts touched with the spirit of his own deep love.

Then comes the third temptation. He is in the prophetic mood peculiar to a great poetic soul. He seems to himself to stand on the tip of a high mountain with all the kingdoms of a world spread out before him: Greece with her temples and her philosophy, Rome with her palaces and her armies, the Orient with her resplendent dreams and legends. All this, says the tempter to him, may be yours, but do not be too quick to challenge the world to mortal combat; you cannot conquer it in a single day. Fight fire with fire. Is Rome corrupt? When you are in Rome you must do as the Romans do. Use worldly policies to vanquish the world. How often has that temptation been repeated to moral reformers, statesmen, preachers, priests, ecclesiastics of every description! So to Napoleon the Great the tempter said, "Serve me, and I will

give thee the kingdoms of the earth and the glory thereof;" and he gave him St. Helena. So to Napoleon III. he said, "Bow down to me, and serve me, and I will give thee the kingdoms of the world and the glory thereof;" and he gave him Chiselhurst. The last and the most delusive temptation of the devil is to compromise with moral evil; but when that temptation comes before the pure soul of Jesus, instinctively and with a flash of indignation comes the answer, "Get thee behind me, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. No worldliness shall be in my religion; no compromise with evil in my uncompromising battle against it. It may slay me, but I will rise again."

CHAPTER VI.—THE BEGINNING OF THE KINGDOM

John i., 19–51 ; ii., 1–11

Jesus compares his kingdom to a grain of mustard-seed, which is itself the least of seeds, but when it is grown becomes the greatest of herbs. In the theme suggested for to-day we see this least of seeds before it is planted and has begun to grow. This is the spring which has since become the river of God, this the germinant beginning of that Christianity which has since overspread two continents and is gradually permeating a third with its transforming power.

The reader of "Marcella" will recall that remarkable chapter in her experience in which she is brought to the consciousness that humanity cannot save itself:

"Nobody could live in hospital, nobody could go among the poor, nobody could share the thoughts and hopes of people, like Edward Hallin and his sister, without understanding that it is still here in the world—this grace 'that sustaineth'—however variously interpreted; still living and working as it worked of old among the little Galilean towns, in Jerusalem, in Corinth. To Edward Hallin it did not mean the same, perhaps, as it meant to the hard-worked clergymen she knew, or to Mrs. Jervis. But to all it meant the motive power of life—something subduing, transforming, delivering—something that to-night she envied with a passion and a yearning that amazed herself."

It is the revelation of this grace, as "something subduing, transforming, delivering," which constitutes the secret of Christianity. John the Baptist was not a prophet of this grace. He was a prophet of the Law. When a delegation from the Sanhedrim came to inquire if he was the Messiah whom Hebrew prophets had foretold, and who would subdue, transform, deliver, he answered, No!

He was not even a prophet of that Messiah. He was only a Voice crying in the wilderness, and bidding men prepare for him. When the people, their consciences touched by John the Baptist's fearless denunciation of their sins, asked for a remedy, he could suggest none except that they should be generous and just and humane. He had a passion of righteousness, but no message of help or hope to a people who, vaguely desiring or eagerly craving it, yet could not achieve it.

To him came his cousin to be baptized. John had known Jesus before; but it had never occurred to him that this Jesus was the Messiah. "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country." In the hour of baptism the truth was flashed upon him. Whether the Holy Spirit took on the form of a dove and descended, or a dove descended and was accepted by John as a symbol of the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit descended as a dove descends, the figure being in the Evangelist's record, not in any outward and visible sign, and whether the voice from heaven spake audibly or only to the soul of John the Baptist, it is not very material to discuss; enough to say that the spiritual nature and power of the Helper and Saviour of men were now for the first time perceived by the Hebrew prophet, and no sooner perceived than declared. He knew how eagerly the Jewish people were looking for this revealer of grace, this bringer of power. He knew how all eyes and hearts would turn to him. There is a pathos in his declarations, "His shoe-latchet I am not worthy to unloose," and "He must increase, but I must decrease." This is a realization never easy to be borne, perhaps least easy to be borne by one who is conscious of his own divine mission. But John seems not to have hesitated for a day, but straightway to have sent his own followers to the new Master whose glory was so soon to dim his own.

Two circumstances must have made this course of John the more difficult. The spirit and method of Jesus differed radically from his own. John possessed the Hebrew spirit. He was a Puritan before the days of Puritanism. His method of meeting temptation was to flee from it. He shunned the haunts of men; lived in the wilderness; protested against social corruption by withdrawing altogether from society. But this was not Christ's method. He

went into society; joined not only in its religious ceremonials but in its social life. He looked without protest on the children dancing in the market-place; ate not only with the scrupulous and orderly, but with the publicans and sinners, and began his ministry, when he left the preacher from the wilderness, by attending a wedding-feast, whose festivities far transcended those usual in our time, and by adding to them a generous and unexpected contribution to the wine when the stock was exhausted. It would have been strange if this did not puzzle John, for it has puzzled some modern Christians who might be supposed to have understood better than did John the principles and spirit of Jesus, but who have, nevertheless, either frankly deprecated this act of their Master, or less frankly attempted to explain it away.[1]

Partly, perhaps, because of this diversity in method and spirit, John's faith in Jesus seems to have been very far from a clear and positive conviction. It is true that he pointed his own disciples to Jesus as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." But he never followed Jesus himself. He continued a separate ministry, baptizing not as a symbol of allegiance to Jesus as the Messiah, but only as a pledge of repentance from sin. And when later he was imprisoned by Herod in the Castle of Machærus, his perplexity at the course of Jesus so grew that he sent two of his disciples to inquire whether his cousin were really the Messiah. He seemed to say, "I know you cannot be a false pretender; I know you too well for that. But have I been mistaken in thinking you the Messiah?" So evident, indeed, is this later perplexity of John that Strauss, who seems to think that Bible characters have an immunity from the contradictions and perplexities which beset ordinary mortals, supposes that John's testimony to Jesus must have been invented at a later date and attributed to John for controversial purposes.

If from John the Baptist we turn to his disciples, their faith seems to have been neither clearer nor stronger than his. They go to see Jesus; they are impressed by his personality; but they do not appear to entertain at all

[1] By the invention of the two-wine theory, which has no standing with modern scholars, and is refuted, if additional refutation were necessary, by the substantially unanimous testimony of all who are familiar with the life and customs of the East.

the idea that he is the Messiah; nor do they attach themselves to him and become his followers until a considerably later period. They remain with him a little while—how long we cannot tell—and then return to their Galilean home and their fishing, where some months later Jesus finds them and calls them to follow him.

John believes Jesus to be the Messiah; but does not follow him. John's disciples go to confer with him, and are impressed by his personality; but they do not follow him. And Jesus himself, turning his back on the ministry of John at the river Jordan, and stopping his own ministry, which is already beginning to be accompanied by more converts than that of his predecessor, goes off to Galilee to enjoy himself and add to the enjoyment of others at a wedding-feast, while his first *pseudo* followers leave both John and Jesus and return to their fishing.

This is a strange beginning for a religious life which is to overspread and conquer the world. But Jesus is not in haste. He will leave Peter and Andrew and James and John time to think over what they have seen and heard. The kingdom of God is a growth; and growth is a gradual process from small beginnings.

CHAPTER VII.—THE CHALLENGE

John ii., 13–25; iii., 1–21

If John the Baptizer or his disciples thought, as has sometimes been thought since, that Jesus lacked in virile courage, that he expected to conquer evil without offering it battle, that the only might he would put forth would be the "irresistible might of meekness," the act by which in Jerusalem he initiated his public ministry[1] should have sufficed to correct the misapprehension.

John, bold as he was, had never gone up to Jerusalem to challenge the priesthood there. Denouncing the corruption of his time, he had remained apart from it. Outspoken and fearless, he was still a recluse. Himself the son of a priest, perhaps a traditional reverence for the priesthood combined with an innate aversion to the crowded city and an unconscious prudence to keep him out of the immediate vicinity of the powerful priestly clique which controlled the miscalled Holy City. But neither traditional reverence nor considerations of personal prudence ever had the slightest effect on the course of Jesus. His reverence was for spiritual realities; he had none for shams. And to prudential considerations of a purely personal character he appears to have been wholly indifferent. Returning from his brief holiday in Galilee, he went directly to Jerusalem, and there began his public career by an act of unmistakable defiance to the Jewish hierarchy.

The Jews flocking to Jerusalem from all quarters of the globe, especially at the Passovers, required oxen, sheep, and doves for their sacrifices, and conveniences for exchanging their foreign money for the Jewish coins, which alone were received for Temple tribute. The marketmen had gradually drawn nearer and nearer the Temple, until

[1] I agree with Ewald, Edersheim, and others in thinking that John correctly puts the expulsion of the traders from the Temple at the beginning of Christ's ministry. Whether there was a second expulsion at the close of his ministry need not be considered here.

at last they had ensconced themselves in its outer court. This magnificent porch, called the Court of the Gentiles, because no Gentile was allowed to pass beyond its inner gates into the more sacred inclosures beyond, had become a market-place, where the lowing of cattle, the bleating of sheep, the cooing of doves, and the chink of the money-changers dispelled all thoughts of worship, and made all public instruction, to which this court was naturally adapted, quite impossible. The bargaining spirit of the Hebrew was not exorcised by the atmosphere of the Temple; and this market-place, like most Oriental exchanges of the present day, was the scene of overcharges, false representations, scarcely concealed frauds, and perpetual haggling and dispute. Nor was this all. The family of Annas controlled the priesthood, of which Annas was at times the nominal and always the real head. This desecration of the Temple was carried on with his approval and for his profit. So large a share did he and his family have in the trafficking that the market was known as the Bazaar of Annas;[1] the profits of the transactions, which legally belonged to the Temple, were seized upon by him and his dependents. In a word, what in modern language is called a "ring" had control of the Temple, used its outer court as a market-place, practically coerced all pilgrims to purchase in this market-place, and grew rich by an illegal spoliation of the people and profanation of the Temple. It is probable that Jesus had often been in Jerusalem before, had seen this desecration, and had shared the indignation of the common people—an indignation apparently wholly powerless to remedy the wrong.

But, according to the Jewish habit of thought, wrongs which there was no legal power to correct, a prophet, commissioned of God, might correct without using any forms of law. On this eventful day, Jesus, entering the Court of the Gentiles, stooped, gathered from the floor some of the rushes with which it was strewed as a litter for the cattle, wove out of them a quite harmless whip, and then, advancing upon the traffickers, with flaming eye drove them from the courts which they had so long profaned. It was perhaps because John was present at this scene that

[1] See Edersheim, "Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," Vol. I., p. 372.

afterwards, in the Island of Patmos, when he saw One with eyes aflame, feet like brass, and a voice like the sound of many waters, it reminded him of Jesus—not improbably as he appeared in this memorable scene. "Conscience does make cowards of us all;" and the traffickers, knowing that their occupation was illegal, knowing better than the people knew how corrupt was the traffic they were carrying on knowing the deep popular discontent, and surprised by the suddenness of the onslaught and the moral power of the indignant prophet, made no stand, but fled without resistance or remonstrance.

When later they did remonstrate, Jesus made no attempt to pacify them. "You are destroying this Temple," he replied; "and I will build it up again." When men divert a temple from its legitimate use as a place of public worship and public instruction, and convert it into a means for self-aggrandizement, satisfied ambition, social enjoyment, or party strife and party victory, they destroy it. It ceases to be a temple. It becomes a market-place, a public forum, a social club, a party camp. This was what the hierarchy had done to the Temple at Jerusalem. And Christ would, by his death and resurrection, rebuild what they had destroyed. Christianity is Judaism risen from the dead. Whenever ecclesiastics expel the spirit of faith and hope and love from a religious service or a religious organization, they destroy its religious character. Whenever prophets bring back in new forms that spirit, they rebuild, though in new structures, the temple which apostasy has destroyed. This—not merely a prophecy of his resurrection, still less of the literal overthrow of Herod's Temple by Titus—appears to me to be involved in Christ's somewhat enigmatical declaration, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it again." The challenge of his words was as unmistakable in its defiance as the challenge of his deed. From that day to the tragical end the hierarchy was the implacable and mortal enemy of the Man who had brought upon it public disgrace, threatened it with the loss of its ill-gotten gains, and espoused against it the cause of the common people.

To rebuke a single person, face to face, requires sometimes a courage as great, though of a different order, as to

withstand a mob. The former task is especially difficult for the kindliest natures, for men of true and tender sympathy, who incline to regard all men at their best, and whose love makes them reluctant to inflict pain and seem to quench the nascent but irresolute inclination toward a higher life.

The Pharisees, that is, the Puritans of the first century, were divided, though not sharply, into two classes—the mere ceremonialists, and the men of a real though not profound morality. One of the latter school, Nicodemus by name, as profoundly affected as a man of such a type could be by the strong personality of Jesus, came to him, after the expulsion of the traders from the Temple, for a quiet conference. To understand the conversation which ensued, which John alone has reported, the reader must bear in mind that the doctrine of the "new birth" was a perfectly familiar doctrine to the Pharisee.[1] He held that when a pagan became a Jew, and so a worshiper of the true God, he must be baptized as a symbol of the change; in this baptism all old faiths were washed away; he emerged from the baptism a "new creature;" he was said to be "born again;" he took on a new name; and so radical was the supposed change that some rabbis taught that all old relationships were abolished, and that he might virtuously marry his own sister if he chose. Nicodemus frankly recognized in Jesus a new prophet, and asked him as to his teaching. And Jesus answered as frankly that it was not new teaching he or any Jew needed, but a new life. The Jew as well as the pagan needed to be born again; needed to be baptized; needed to have his old conception of righteousness washed away; needed a new conception to take its place. When Nicodemus attempted to turn aside the point of this teaching by a sneer, Jesus responded by an expression of surprise that he, a teacher of Israel, and perfectly familiar with the doctrine of the "new birth," should pretend not to understand it when it was applied to himself. You also, he said, need to receive the Spirit of God, need by its indwelling to be made a "new creation," need to have faith in that grace which transforms and delivers, and in Him who brings it as God's free gift to man.

[1] See Edersheim, "Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," Vol. I., p. 384.

As, by his expulsion of the traders and his subsequent interpretation of it, Jesus challenged the ecclesiasticism which substitutes ceremonialism for worship, so, by his pointed and unmistakable declaration to Nicodemus, he challenged the traditionalism which substitutes opinion for life. These two have been the chief enemies of the Christ in the world: the one offering a worship which is no worship, and the other a righteousness which is no righteousness; the one robbing all worship of its reality, and the other all obedience of its virtue, by that insincerity which is common to ceremonies which are without self-surrender, and to both deeds and creeds which are without faith.

CHAPTER VIII.—CHRIST AS A CONVERSATIONIST[1]

John iii., 22–36; iv., 1–42

It may at first seem strange to us, as it evidently did seem strange to Christ's disciples, that, after moving all Jerusalem by his bold attack upon the traffickers in the Temple, and after preaching to throngs on the banks of Jordan, where more flocked not only to listen but to be baptized than had come to John's preaching, Jesus should seemingly turn his back upon this work, and be next found spending his time in a quiet conversation with an heretical and much-divorced woman. But if we study Christ's life at all thoughtfully, we can hardly fail to note that he dealt with individuals at least as much as with assemblies, and that conversation was the method of his instruction rather than oratory. The story suggested for our reflection to-day illustrates both his method and his power as a conversationist.

Wearied with his journey, he sits down to rest by the side of a great well, or cistern, with steps leading from the well-curb to the water below. The women come out from the neighboring villages, with their water-pots on their heads, to draw the water for their houses. As he sits there, a woman comes from the village with her water-pot. He opens the conversation with what is the surest road to a woman's heart—he asks her for a favor. "Give me a drink," he says. She draws back astonished. "You, a Jew, ask me, a woman of Samaria, for a drink of water?" By a transition so natural that perhaps we may never have thought that there was a transition even, he turns instantly from material to spiritual things: "If you knew who it is that is talking with you, you would have asked me for living water." She answers with a sarcasm: "Art thou

[1] The most important feature in John iii., 22–36 is John the Baptizer's testimony to Jesus as the Christ, and to this I have already referred in Chapters IV. and VI.

greater than our father Jacob? Give me this living water, that I come no more here to draw, weary and tired." He surprises her with a summons that brings the story of her life instantly to herself: "Go, call thy husband." "I have no husband." "Thou sayest truly thou hast no husband: thou hast had five husbands." She parries the thrust with a change in the conversation. "You are a prophet, I see. Where should we worship—in Jerusalem or in this mountain?" A less skillful conversationist would have pushed his apparent advantage—pressed heavily that which he had brought to bear on her conscience; but not so Christ. Christ allows her to change the topic. He has brought to her own conscience the sense of her sin, and he allows her to change the topic. The time is coming when God will be worshiped neither here nor in Jerusalem. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him in spirit and in truth, they are his worshipers, wherever they may be. She forgets her errand—forgets that she has come for water; forgets Christ's thirst; forgets everything; and hurries back to the city—ordained in this brief conversation to be a prophet and missionary, and to be the first to preach the Gospel of a Messiah in the Samaritan city.

The first thought that must strike us in this narrative is, as I have already said, Christ's use of conversation as a method of spiritual instruction. I can find in the Four Gospels but five true Discourses; the rest are conversations, or begin as conversations, though they become monologues. The two greatest teachers of all time, Christ and Socrates, taught chiefly by conversation. There is no way to a human heart so direct; and yet none that we treat so lightly, if not contemptuously. The writer gets no response from voice or face. The orator gets a feeble response from a few speaking faces in the audience. But in conversation two souls are opened to each other, and their inner lives intermingle. He who teaches through conversation knows what is received, what rejected, what progress in imparting truth is made. In conversation lies the best and deepest part of our influence; and yet we treat it in so careless and casual a manner that we scarcely think what we are doing, still less what we might do with it.

Not less important to note as characteristic of every good conversationist, as pre-eminently characteristic of

Christ, is his broad and catholic sympathies. We open the Gospel of John, and in the third chapter we read the story of Christ's conversation with the Jewish Rabbi. He is on the same plane with the Jewish Rabbi, talks in the metaphors which that Rabbi understands, has an appreciation of his soul-life, and enters into it. We turn the page. We come to a conversation with a woman of Samaria, ignorant, degraded, sinful, not even a Jew, with no apparent community—social, intellectual, or moral—between them, but a great gulf fixed; and yet he has sympathy with her. We turn a few pages further on in this same Gospel, and we find him entering into conversation with enemies. We turn a few pages more, and we find him sitting at the last table with his disciples, friends, and companions, filled with their thoughts, their perplexities, their interrogatories; but in every case alike—with the Jewish Rabbi, with the Samaritan woman, with the hostile Jew, with the friendly disciples—in sympathy, in touch—what we call tact.

Tact—what is it? The touch of one soul with another soul—sympathy. I can talk music a little with the musician, for I am fond of music; less of art with the artist, for I know that less; about theology with the theologian, if he is not too far removed from me theologically; but if I cannot talk with the car conductor, or the brakeman, or the driver, or the hod-carrier, or the day-laborer in my cellar or in my country place, it is because my sympathies are narrow, because, somehow or other, I fail to have that largeness of sympathy which enters into every human life.

We see, too, that Christ's sympathies were as quick as they were catholic. He had sympathy with all men, and he had quick, responsive sympathy. His soul was receptive as well as distributive. He was as quick to receive impression as he was to give it forth. The musician plays on the keys of the organ. They are inert, and answer to his touch. But when the speaker plays on a human soul, he must be keys as well as fingers—he must respond as well as move. The speaker plays on the hearer only as the hearer plays on the speaker. He enters the heart of his auditor only as his auditor enters his heart. So there is no flash of thought, question of perplexity, sorrow, trouble, anywhere, that flings itself out unto Christ that he does not

instantly meet. Intellectual genius in this certainly, but something more than that—quick, ready, responsive, answering sympathies, love for all men, love that instantly answers to every human need—longs to alleviate it.

Because he had this quick and catholic sympathy he drew men out. He made them express themselves; oftentimes against their will evoked their doubts, evoked their sins, evoked their difficulties. Men open to him their souls, and tell him what there is of their doubts and disbeliefs. They fling open the door of their hearts and show themselves to him. This is a rare power—this power of drawing men out of themselves—worth more than oratory, more than rhetoric, more than eloquence, more than the skill of the poet, more than the skill of the preacher—this power to get into men's and women's hearts and lives, and enter their secret souls and bring out their natures. He knew what was in man, it is said; and more than once, we are told, he saw them doubting among themselves, and phrased his answer to their doubting. It is said that this was supernatural knowledge, and perhaps it was; yet there was that in him which saw the shadow on the face, which quickly got the impression of another's answering thought, intuitively and instinctively, and, by that power of sympathy which cannot be defined or interpreted, perceived the inward life and met it.

He had, too, that gift—what shall I call it?—poet-gift, prophetic gift, spiritual gift?—which belongs to men who always live in the eternal world, and see how everything physical is a symbol of the eternal. Most of us do not. We are living in the earthy life, and if we undertake to say anything on the subject of religion to a comrade, we have to go out and drag it in; and when we do that we destroy the value of the word which we have spoken. Truth cannot be brought into the court of a man's conscience as a criminal is by a policeman. But when a man so lives in the eternal that everything physical suggests the eternal, the transition is not strange to others because it is not strained to him. So, to Christ, a drink of water suggests the water of life. So, when men come asking him to show another miracle—feeding thousands with bread—he speaks instinctively, simply, naturally, of the bread of life.

We may have quick and catholic sympathies, power to

draw men out, and something even of a poetic gift, and be what men call good conversationists, and yet carry only entertainment and good fellowship with us. But Christ did more than that. Conversation with him was always the means and instrument of a noble, a divine ministry.

It is often said that Christ never declined an invitation. He went to all men, to all homes, into all company, into all society. It is true. But wherever he went he carried his message of the love of God. He sat at the table, and when he saw men crowd for the best places, he told them a parable, and bid them not do so. He went with his friends to sit down at the table, and, there being no one to wash their feet, no one willing to take the servant's duty on himself, he girded himself with the towel, washed their feet, and thus taught them a lesson of purity and humility. He turned the humblest and least incidents of life into moral lessons. He was always—if one may say so—master of the conversation. He was not carried by its drift wherever it might happen to go, but, like a skillful helmsman having his hand on the helm, guided it in what direction he would have it to go. He did not do this by battle. You may look in the Four Gospels in vain for a debate in which Christ ever took part. He answered questions, but he never fenced. Not by standing for one opinion against another, not by combating, but through the power of sympathy, of touch, of the truth of which he was always and everywhere the Minister and Prophet, he carried the truth into the hearts of men.

The Life of Christ

CHAPTER IX.—CHRIST'S DEFINITION OF HIS MISSION

Luke iii., 18–20; iv., 14–31; John iv., 46–54

John the Baptizer's courageous denunciation of the flagrant iniquity of Herod had led to his arrest and imprisonment, and this had removed the only danger which Jesus feared—the danger of an apparent rivalry between his ministry and that of John. He had already left the Jordan when it was reported that more were coming to his preaching and his baptism than to John's. Now that all danger of a possible denominational strife between the disciples of the two prophets was removed, he took up John the Baptist's message, and began to preach, "The kingdom of God is at hand." His preaching was very simple but very powerful. Perhaps it would be more correct to say very simple and therefore very powerful. He spoke to the common people in their vernacular, using illustrations drawn from their common life, yet never descending from the high plane of noble spiritual instruction. He used no arts of elocution or rhetoric; ordinarily sat when speaking; was not, therefore, a dramatic speaker. His addresses contain no eloquent passages such as a school-boy may declaim, nor are his sermons included among what are commonly called the great literary classics of ancient time. He was not scholastic—borrowed no power from the treasure-house of the past; nor hierarchical—he used not the power of a priestly class. His eloquence lay less in his method than in the contents of his message.

The world had reached its lowest ebb; government was despotic; labor enslaved; the common people hopelessly ignorant; the prophets had died out of Israel, and the scribes had taken their place. Public taxation was public robbery, and if one man, more fortunate than his fellows, managed to amass a little property, his only way of saving it was to bury it in the ground, and so keep it from the tax-gatherer. The common people lived in that hopelessness which is sometimes mistaken for content, and looked back to an imagined golden age because, except as faith in Old Testament prophecy inspired an otherwise seemingly groundless hope, they had no future to look forward to.

To this age and occasion Christ came with the extraordinary message that the kingdom of God was at hand. The nature of his preaching is illustrated by the one sermon of which we have a very brief report in the fourth chapter of Luke. He went into the synagogue of the village where his boyhood had been passed. His reputation as a reformer had preceded him from Judea, and he was invited to address the villagers from the sacred desk. The roll containing the book of Isaiah was handed to him; he turned to and read the following passage:

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor: he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and re overing of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

"This promised year," he said to them, "has arrived. I am the Deliverer, and this is my mission. But you are mistaken if you think that this deliverance is coming only to Israel. The pagan as well as the Israelite shares in the love and is to receive the good gift of the heavenly Father." Race-prejudice was far greater in that day than it is in this, bad as it is now; and it was intensified by religion, which since Christ has done something to mitigate it. Christ, in attacking this prejudice, endeavored to avoid embittering it, by illustrating the catholicity of God's grace by familiar stories from Old Testament history; but the endeavor was vain. The people, who had at first listened with pleasure to the prophet's words, were filled with wrath at his implication that God is the God of the heathen as well as of the Jew; they rose in a body and would have killed him

had he not escaped from their hands. Facing the mob with that grandeur which at times filled onlookers with awe, he passed through the angry throng and went his way.

We, in this nineteenth century, can hardly realize what it is to live without hope; with no expectation of a better future hereafter; under a despotism never to be lightened; under a taxation never to be other than spoliation; under a social system affording no chance for education or personal development. The American must go abroad to the peasantry of Russia or Egypt or India or China to get any conception of the mental and moral hopelessness of the common people in the Roman Empire, and especially in its provinces, in the first century. The message of Christ to this people was a message of hope: glad tidings to the poor—better opportunities, a larger distribution of wealth, more diffused and universal comfort; comfort to the broken-hearted—hope at the open grave, flowers for crape, and the smile of an anticipated meeting mingled with the tears of a present separation; deliverance to the captives—the breaking of the scepter of despotic authority, the translation of government from a military to an industrial and social organization, and the emancipation of industry itself, first from the bondage of slavery, then from the bondage of feudalism, finally from the bondage involved in the modern wages system; the recovering of sight to the blind—hospitals, asylums, charitable provisions of various kinds for the unfortunate, the weak, the incompetent—and recovering of sight to the mentally blind, in the establishment of universal systems of popular and public education; liberty to those that are bruised—the emancipation of body, soul, and spirit from all the bruising manacles which despotism has fastened upon humanity: this was the mission of Christ—the mission which he fulfilled while he lived; the mission which he left to his followers as their heritage; the mission which the Church has been, however imperfectly, fulfilling in the centuries which have rolled by since this sermon at Nazareth was preached.[1]

We cannot go behind Christ's own definition of his mission. Nor can we substitute therefor, subtract therefrom, nor add thereto, without wrong to him and to ourselves.

[1] For historic illustrations of the fulfillment of this mission see Dr. R. S. Storrs's "Historic Evidences of Christianity" and Charles S. Brace's "Gesta Christi."

He came, according to his own definition, not to form a church organization, though the church was to be the instrument for the execution of his work; not to establish a theological system, though truth was also to be the instrument of his work; but to establish the kingdom of righteousness and peace upon the earth, righteousness in place of injustice, peace in place of war; to establish the kingdom of God upon the earth, and that is the kingdom of liberty, of righteousness, and of peace. Nothing is true Christian theology which does not directly or indirectly help to fulfill this mission as Christ has defined it; and no society is a true Christian church, nor a part of the true Christian Church, which is not endeavoring to fulfill the mission which Christ in this first sermon declared to be his mission, and which, in his farewell words, after his resurrection, he gave to his disciples, following in his footsteps and inspired by his spirit, to fulfill.

CHAPTER X.—"A DAY WITH JESUS"

Mark i., 16–45; Luke v., 1–11

In our study of the life of Christ, attracted by the more romantic and striking features of his character, we are apt to pass by in ignorance the more prosaic, though not less essential, virtues. By many students of the Gospel his industry and energy are probably but little considered. Renan, in his picture of the Galilean ministry of Christ, gives an impression of a purely idyllic life, a sort of perpetual picnic and continuous ovation. So profoundly has the inward peace of the Master impressed itself on the minds of his disciples that few realize that this peace was maintained in the midst of a life of ceaseless activity, continual conflict, almost unbroken external excitement. It is quite safe to say that no man ever accomplished so much in so brief a public life as was accomplished by Jesus Christ between his baptism and his crucifixion. Luther's personal ministry lasted something over a quarter of a century; John Wesley's, about seventeen years; Jesus Christ's, a little over three years. During these three years he personally preached in all the principal towns and cities of Palestine. He traveled hundreds of miles on foot. He carried on innumerable reported and unreported conversations with individual inquirers and individual critics. He acted as physician, healing probably hundreds who came to him for help, ministering to them with his own hands. He selected companions to be his immediate disciples, to learn from him his principles and promulgate them after he had gone; and he so imbued them with those principles and with his spirit that, instead of being scattered by his death, they were brought more closely together, and formed an organization which has since, in different forms, extended over and, by its spiritual influence, dominated the entire civilized world. Wherever he went he was thronged by crowds, sometimes enthusiastic and admiring, some-

times demanding help which always cost him vital energy, sometimes hostile and even threatening personal violence. The houses of his friends furnished him no real opportunity for repose, for the clamorous crowds flowed into them, overrunning all barriers. If he crossed the Lake of Gennesaret, seeking a little quiet in the comparatively deserted hills on the opposite shore, the multitude followed after him, some by boats and some on foot. If he left Palestine altogether, and sought to escape the throng in a pagan community, he found that his reputation had gone before him and he could not be hid. Apparently he had only two resources for repose. He seems to have been fond of the water, and sometimes to have sailed out upon the lake and there secured a little exemption from the crowd. Once so weary was he that the tossing to and fro of the boat in a tempest, sufficiently severe to affright stout-hearted sailors, failed to disturb him. His other resource was to wait until the world was wrapped in sleep and then go up on some of the hills, among which he passed most of his life, and secure for solitude, meditation, and prayer a little time from the hours which man generally gives to slumber.

The Scripture suggested for our study to-day is mainly occupied with giving a picture of one day in the life of Jesus. It is not unreasonable to suppose that this day was but one of many equally full of service.[1]

The Sea of Galilee, a lake in size and shape somewhat similar to Lake Luzerne in Switzerland Loch Lomond in Scotland, or our own Winnipesaukee, was in the time of Christ the center of a teeming and busy population. No less than six cities of considerable size were crowded along thirteen miles of coast-line on its western and northwestern shores; its waters furnished employment for hundreds of fishermen; lying on the direct caravan route between the East and the Mediterranean shore, it was the center of a busy trade; it was the watering-place of the wealthy and the fashionable at certain seasons of the year; and on the hillsides around were cultivated vineyards, and in the fertile plains the farmer turned the furrow and dropped his seed. Here, therefore, were gathered representatives of every class, and their vocations furnished the material for

[1] The student who can do so is recommended to read Delitzsch's "A Day with Jesus Christ."

every type of parable: the merchantman seeking goodly pearls, the net cast into the sea, the sower sowing his seed, the vineyard with its unfruitful tree, the guests invited to a royal marriage feast. Cast out from Nazareth, Christ came down to Capernaum, one of the principal cities upon this lake, and made it his home, so far as he could be said to have any home. The disciples of John the Baptizer, who had for a little while gathered about him on the banks of the Jordan, had gone back to their peasant occupations. Jesus Christ was alone.

It was apparently upon a Friday that he finds four of these men, after an all-night fishing expedition, washing their nets on the shore of the lake. He begs the loan of one of their boats, pushes it out a few feet from the shore, and, sitting down in it, talks to the people gathered in a natural amphitheater upon the beach. His sermon over, he turns to Simon and bids him push out into deeper water and throw his nets again. It was hardly to be expected that a fisherman who had toiled all night in vain would take directions respecting his own craft from the son of a carpenter. But there was something in the personality of Jesus Christ which overrode all such prejudices. Simon followed the direction, and the net was filled to breaking.

This is the time, strangely inopportune it would naturally seem, which Jesus chooses in which to call on these four fishermen to leave their work and attach themselves to him; but Jesus was accustomed to choose times which afforded a test of character. The four fishermen stand the test; they leave their catch of fish, their nets, their boats, with some of their comrades, attracted by no other promise than this, that they shall be successful in catching men. Not till some time after, it must be remembered, did these disciples come to a settled faith in Jesus as the promised Messiah, and not till after his death and resurrection did they have any true conception of what his Messiahship meant.

The next day—certainly within a day or two after—Jesus enters into the synagogue at Capernaum, and repeats there his message that the kingdom of God is at hand. The power of his glad tidings, which evokes all that is manliest and divinest in his auditors, and fills them with a new hope for

themselves and their fellows, is felt by the audience, who recognize the fact that here is a preacher of a different sort from that of the hair-splitting, technical, scholastic scribes. A lunatic in the synagogue, whom the people of that age believed to be possessed of an evil spirit, interrupts the service; the Master cures him with a word.[1] The lunatic in that age was looked upon, not, as now, with sympathy, but with reprobation, and Christ's response to the interruption of the service, not by an angry rebuke, but by a merciful remedy, probably quite as much as the remedy itself, surprised the people.

The service over, Jesus goes with his four disciples to the home of Simon Peter, who was married, and whose mother-in-law lay sick in the house. In the simple science of that day fevers were classified as "little" and "great." Luke, a physician, characterized this as a great fever; that is, one of the most serious and aggravated type. Simon appeals to the Master for help; it is granted; and the woman, without passing through any period of convalescence, straightway arises and ministers to the household.[2]

Sunset is a sign for the commencement of the greatest social activity in Palestine, and at sunset the obligation of Sabbath rest comes to its close. As the sun goes down behind the western hills, a motley crowd begins to besiege the house of Peter. Hither come the helpless paralytic, the unhappy epileptic, the blind groping their way, the lunatic in his half-consciousness of disease; hither invalids borne by others on their mattresses, or parents bringing their children, or children supporting their aged and infirm parents; hither also a great crowd drawn by curiosity to see and hear this rabbi and physician, whose words and works have filled the city with his fame. To them all Christ ministered. Nor was it till night had spread its curtains over the whole scene that the crowd dispersed and left Jesus to repose. Sorely must he have needed it, for at every touch he felt virtue go out of him. Every struggle with disease or death, or the greater evil of

[1] It is not possible in a paragraph to discuss the problem of demoniacal possession. For reasons which I have stated in my "Jesus of Nazareth," Chapter XIII., I believe not only that there really was, but that there really still is, such a phenomenon.

[2] In this incident one may, without undue fancifulness, see a type of Christ's spiritual cure: he not only banishes the disease, but he inspires health and strength for newness of life.

sin, cost him effort, and the more effort because in all diseases and death he saw at once the symbol and the consequence of sin. So apparent was this cost to the Master that his disciples looking on him instinctively applied to him the words of the ancient prophet, "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." The nervous exhaustion of the day was too great to permit sleep, and, rising early in the morning, he sought repose in solitude and prayer, away from the haunts of men.

Such was one day of Christ's life. Such the industry, the energy, the enthusiasm, the self-sacrifice of his service.

CHAPTER XI.—ELEMENTS OF HOSTILITY TO JESUS

Mark ii., 1–22

It is a great mistake to suppose that Jesus's ministry was at its commencement one of unhindered popularity. If, as I believe to be the case, he began his public ministry with the expulsion of the traders from the Temple, his life was from the very beginning one of conflict with a bitterly hostile and powerful faction. The Scripture recommended for to-day and for next Sunday suggests some of the special criticisms which this faction brought against him. So far as past sin was concerned, he seems to have uniformly ignored the sacrificial system of the Jewish people. Upon their repentance he pronounced the penitents forgiven without ever requiring them to make any sin-offering for the past. Of course he was accused of blasphemous assumption in thus claiming to forgive sins without any ceremonial and priestly atonement for them. He called his disciples not merely from the peasant class, not merely from those ignorant of Jewish theology and tradition, but also from the publicans, that is, the tax-gatherers, and they had been morally as well as ceremonially unclean. He not only preached to the poorest, the lowest, and the most outcast, but he accepted their invitations and sat down to eat with them. No wonder that he was accused of ignoring social distinctions, and even of disregarding the moral law. He simply and quietly ignored many, if not most, of the ceremonial regulations upon which the Jewish religious teachers laid so much stress. He ate with unwashed hands—that is, with hands that were ceremonially unclean. Neither he nor his disciples paid any attention to the fasts which Jewish tradition had prescribed, and which were regarded as at once the test and the sign of piety. And he used himself, and recommended to others, a liberty on the Sabbath day which seemed to the Pharisees utterly subversive of

the Mosaic law. No wonder that they accused him of setting that law at defiance. But we must look beneath these accusations to get at the real secret of the hostility to Jesus Christ, and in this paper I propose to suggest some of the elements of that hostility which are to be borne in mind by the student in considering the criticisms reported in the second chapter of Mark.

In the first place, then, Christ set himself against the established order in Church and in State. The few were rich, the many poor; the few learned, the many ignorant. He undertook to reverse this condition—to make the many rich, the many wise; and the few who were at the top did not like it then, have not liked it since, and probably will not like it to the end of time. He paid no deference to wealth, and wealth likes to be deferred to; none to wisdom, and wisdom demands deference. Neither wealth nor wisdom seemed to him of any value unless they were used for the enrichment and the enlightenment of others: and the doctrine that wealth and wisdom are valuable only as means for serving the poor and the ignorant is always resented. In brief, Christ led the great democratic movement which has gone through history from that time to this, leveling all institutions that have attempted to withstand the uprising of humanity. He taught that the whole human race is to be redeemed and made worthy to be called the children of God; that man—not the Jew-man, nor the rich man, nor the wise man, nor the well-bred man, but man as man—is to be transformed, educated, enfranchised, enriched, until the whole human race shall be one great brotherhood; and the established order hated him for this teaching.

This established order was intrenched behind and allied with a superstitious conception of religion akin to idolatry. Piety was confounded with temple-worship; religion with reverence for the priesthood; faith with belief in traditional theology. Christ did not, except in defense of his teaching, attack temple-worship, the priestly order, or the traditional theology, for in doing this there was danger that he would seem to be attacking piety, reverence, and faith. But indirectly he attacked this superstitious substitute for religion by teaching explicitly that practical obedience is better than temple sacrifice, that worship of

the Father is not confined to the Temple, but is possible in every place, and that, not to reverence a priesthood or obey a tradition, but to do righteously and to love one's neighbor, is religion. All the conventional religionism of that day re-enforced the established order in its hostility to a prophet whom the Scribes doubtless sincerely believed was destroying religion because he was effectually destroying the material symbols with which religion had been so long confounded.

For it is true that Christ did undermine the religious forms of his day. It is impossible to teach men that they have direct access to their heavenly Father without diminishing their reverence for a priest whom they have regarded as an essential mediator; impossible to teach them that practical obedience, not ceremonial observance, is the true test of piety without weakening the hold which the hierarchy has upon them; above all, impossible to teach men to think for themselves without weakening the authority of those who have assumed to do their thinking for them. It has always been the aim, conscious or unconscious, of traditionalism to prevent men from thinking for themselves and to require them to accept ready-made thought forged for them in some other man's mind. Christ's teaching was revolutionary, not so much because he attacked traditionalism directly—though he sometimes did that—as because he incited men to think. He flung out aphorisms to them which set them thinking; taught them in parables and riddles and enigmas that compelled them to think. Whenever a prophet comes into the world with this as his fundamental message, that every man is by nature a child of God, and has direct access to his Father, and, being a child of God, has an inalienable right to study life for himself and find out the truth which it has for him, he is counted a dangerous heretic by all those who believe that access to God is the privilege of an aristocratic few, and power to think the power of an aristocratic few. Those who believe that men are children and are to be kept in leading-strings always have risen against such teachers and always will.

To these elements of hostility must be added that race-prejudice which assailed Jesus with mob violence in his first sermon at Nazareth. The two bitterest prejudices of

humanity are those of race and those of religion. It would not require more courage to tell a mob of Anarchists in their hall at Chicago that men of wealth were of more worth than themselves, not more courage to commend the virtues of Chinamen to an audience of sand-lotters in San Francisco, not more courage to praise the virtues of the African to an audience of Southern fire-eaters, than it required for Jesus Christ to commend the pagan centurion or the half-pagan Samaritan to an audience of Jews. All that which men often mistake for zeal and for patriotism rose in wrath at this challenge to Jewish narrowness and bigotry.

Race-pride, theological prejudice, superstitious reverence, organized selfishness—these four forces united then, and have co-operated ever since, to withstand the work of Christ in the world. For that work cannot be carried to its completion, and the whole of humanity united in one brotherhood and lifted up into one fellowship with the Father, but that pride will be humiliated, prejudices shamed, superstitious reverence shocked, and organized selfishness disappointed and defeated. To follow Christ is to enlist in the long campaign against these four enemies of human progress.

CHAPTER XII.—THE SABBATH QUESTION

John, chapter v.; Mark ii., 23–26; iii., 1–6

The hostility to Jesus Christ centered chiefly upon two points—his claims concerning himself, and his practice and teaching respecting the Sabbath. It was not until a later epoch in his ministry that his claims respecting himself were at all understood by the priesthood, or even by the common people. It was, therefore, his practice and teaching respecting the Sabbath which at this period of his ministry was made the especial occasion, though, as I attempted to show in the last chapter, not the real cause, of the bitterest hostility to him.

The origin of the observance of one day in seven as a day of sacred rest is lost in the mists of antiquity. It certainly dates, however, from the earliest period of Jewish history, and the law for its observance was regarded as so fundamental to the Jewish commonwealth as to be incorporated in the Ten Commandments, which constitute the constitution of the Hebrew State. This law was, indeed, something quite different from that which Puritanism has attempted to make of it. The Fourth Commandment does not require, either directly or indirectly, any religious observance upon the seventh day of the week. It does not call for any worship, either public or private. It is wholly taken up with prohibiting toil. Like most of God's laws, this statute was a gift. For this commandment prohibiting all secular toil in one day out of the seven came to a nation just emerging from slavery and dwarfed and degraded by servile drudgery. It is true that this prohibition was enforced by very severe penalties; but it is also true that, the toil being prohibited, the individual was left entirely free to spend his leisure time in whatever way he chose. Personally, I believe that the Fourth Commandment is in this respect a wise model for modern legislation to follow. The laborer has a right to be protected in his enjoyment of

one day's rest. That protection being afforded to him, he has a right, so far as his fellow-citizens are concerned, to do whatever he likes with that one day of rest, provided his employment of it does not violate the rights of his fellow-laborers.

But Judaism, like modern Puritanism, was not content with the Mosaic statute. The day, originally observed as a day of gladness in the Temple and of festal scenes at home,[1] was made by Pharisaic regulations a day burdensome and well-nigh intolerable. It ceased to be a day of freedom and became one of bondage. The rules for its observance, as they are to be gathered from the Talmud, seem to us ludicrous. They forbade walking upon the grass with heavy shoes on the Sabbath, because that would be a kind of threshing; catching a flea, because that would be a kind of hunting; eating a newly laid egg on the first day of the week, because, presumptively, it had been prepared by the hen in the course of nature on the seventh day. A little less irrational, but hardly less burdensome, were some of the traditional regulations implied in the Gospel narratives, such as prohibiting the sick from coming to a physician on the Sabbath; prohibiting a man from carrying the cushion or mattress on which he reclined; prohibiting men, if walking through a grain-field, from plucking the ears of grain and eating them as they walked—as if, in our day, a boy should be prohibited from picking an apple from the ground in an orchard and eating it on the Sabbath. Nevertheless, the Sabbath was with the Jew, as it is with the Roman Catholic, a day of festivity. From seasons of fasting the Sabbath was always exempted. The best dinner of the week in the pious Jew's house was served on the Sabbath. "Meet the Sabbath with a lively hunger; let thy table be covered with fish, flesh, and generous wine," is one of the Talmudic aphorisms.

Against the social and festive aspects of this day Christ never uttered a protest. It is evident from the account in the fourteenth chapter of Luke that he did not hesitate to attend on the Sabbath a dinner-party of considerable social pretension.[2] At a time when the issue is so sharply drawn

[1] See Psalms xcii., cxxii.; Lev. xxiii., 2, 3; Psalm xlii., 4; Neh. viii., 9-13.
[2] See Luke xiv., especially verses 1, 7, and 12.

between the Puritan Sabbath—that is, a Sabbath fenced round with legal prohibitions—and what is termed the Continental Sabbath, which, as it reappears on our shore Americanized, is no Sabbath at all, it is difficult to speak frankly and freely without being subject to misunderstanding. Notwithstanding this hazard, I must frankly say that I can see no ground, either in the practice or the teaching of Jesus Christ or in the subsequent teaching of the Apostles, for the notion that there is anything inconsistent with the Christian use of the Christian's rest-day in such social fellowship and enjoyment as are not inconsistent with an advantageous use of its spiritual opportunities and do not make the day one of burdensome toil and labor to others. On the other hand, there is no indication that Jesus engaged in secular work on the Sabbath or encouraged his disciples so to do. This accusation would certainly have been brought against them if there had been any ground whatever for it. But not even Jewish tradition contains any such accusation. On the contrary, Jesus habitually attended the synagogue services on the Sabbath with his disciples, and they apparently continued so to do after his death. And although the day was changed, a weekly Sabbath, imported from Judaism into Christianity, became as characteristic of the primitive Christian Church as it had been of the precedent Jewish Church.

But Christ did repel, with some indignation, the notion that this day, sacred to rest, and therefore to liberty, was to be kept sacred by minute, harassing, and burdensome regulations. He not only healed the sick on this day, but he seems even to have taken pains to do this healing in such a way as to set Jewish tradition at defiance. For he healed the paralytic, not only on the Sabbath, but in the synagogue and in connection with a religious service; and he treated the Pharisaic criticism of this act almost with contempt. The sick man at the pool of Bethesda he not only healed, but he bade him bear his mattress on his shoulders, in direct violation of the letter, though not of the spirit, of a traditional command, embodied in Old Testament history, against all bearing of burdens on that day.[1] Called to account by the Pharisees, Jesus Christ

[1] Neh. xiii., 19; Jer. xvii., 21, 22, 27.

replied that God's rest was the type which man was to follow in his resting. Religion never requires love to cease its activities. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," is not an exceptional justification for the only begotten Son of God, but a principle by which every Son of God may determine what work is legitimate and what illegitimate on the world's rest-day. When his disciples were chided for plucking the ears of grain and eating them as they walked through the grain-field, Christ announced another principle equally comprehensive. "The Sabbath," he said, "was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath; therefore the Son of man is lord also of the Sabbath." This also is not to be interpreted merely as a declaration that the Messiah has a right to modify the Mosaic law. That would be a *non sequitur*. The declaration is that, since the Sabbath was made for man, and is his instrument, he is at liberty to use it with freedom, only always keeping in mind the ends for which this gift has been bestowed upon him.

These teachings do not merely furnish a solvent for many religious perplexities; they involve a principle of wider application. Christ comes, not like frost, to freeze men up, but like sunshine, to set them free. The three most sacred ceremonials of the Jewish religion are circumcision, sacrifices, and the Sabbath law. Christ abolished circumcision; set men free from the law of sacrifices; and the Sabbath, which man had made a day of bondage, Christ converted into a day of liberty.

CHAPTER XIII.—THE SEED OF THE CHURCH[1]

Mark iii., 6–19

Jesus Christ and his Glad-Tidings were received with great popular enthusiasm. The people were eager to hear this new message of hope. One man could not unaided carry it throughout the Holy Land. Had Jesus Christ possessed no foresight, had no prophetic vision suggested to him the necessity of providing some organization which should carry on his work and repeat his message after he was gone, had he never intended to make it a world-wide message, but only a provincial one, still it would have been necessary to secure some co-laborers. From the disciples who accompanied him in his ministry he selected twelve to be especially near to him, to receive his inspiration and his special instructions, to preach his Gospel in the villages while he preached it in the larger cities, and to carry on this ministry in a wider sphere after his death and resurrection. This purpose of his was not apparent at first, but if we take the whole history of his relation to the Twelve, from his first calling of them to his last missionary commission before his ascension, it is clear that his purpose included nothing less than this. Concerning the commission which he gave to these disciples while he was still with them, and the later commission when he was about to leave them, I shall have something to say hereafter. In this paper I confine myself to some observations respecting the principles upon which Jesus apparently selected the Twelve, and their personal character.

It must be confessed that it is difficult to ascertain with any accuracy, from the accounts which have come down to us, the principles upon which Christ's selection of the Twelve was made. We know that some volunteers offered

[1] For fuller treatment of this theme the student is referred to Chapter XVI. in my "Jesus of Nazareth," and to my "Commentary on Matthew," Chapter X., "Supplemental note on the Twelve Apostles, their lives and characters."

to join this band and were refused, and in some instances the ground of the refusal is sufficiently plain.[1] We know also from Christ's own words[2] that the Twelve were not those who accidentally attached themselves to Jesus; they were carefully selected by him from a far greater number of adherents. But, with perhaps three exceptions, there does not appear in their history anything remarkable about these men except their attachment to Jesus. From his Gospel we judge that Matthew possessed a systematic and orderly mind, for he more than any other Evangelist has arranged the sayings of Jesus in a somewhat systematic manner; Peter proved to be an eloquent evangelist; John possessed remarkable spiritual insight, and became in his later years a prominent leader in the Church. But, with these exceptions, no one of the Twelve occupied any very important position in the Church after Christ's death; for James, the brother of Christ, who became a leader in Jerusalem, was not one of the Twelve, nor was Paul, who became the great missionary to the heathen. With the exception of Judas Iscariot, the Twelve were Galileans, selected from the peasant population of Palestine; in the main, simple-minded men, without social advantage, wealth, culture, remarkable insight, or heroic temper. Excepting John, there does not seem to have been among them a single man who could for a moment rank with Moses or David or Isaiah, or, indeed, with any one of the great Hebrew prophets.

Yet we must remember that the story of their lives has not been preserved for us; for the Gospels are the narrative of the life of Christ, and only incidentally of the lives of his followers, and the Book of Acts is less the history of individuals than the history of the Church in its formative period. Moreover, we are likely to be misled by the common statement that they were illiterate men. This means little more than that they were all laymen, untrained in the rabbinical literature of their time. This illiterateness was their best preparation to receive without prejudice that new spiritual life which Jesus Christ had come to impart. In a similar manner, the founders of the Reformation were not scholastics, nor were the leaders in the great Methodist movement taken from the theological

[1] Luke ix., 57-62; Mark v., 18, 19. [2] John xv., 16.

and ecclesiastical schools of the eighteenth century. Illiterate though they were, they were not without that aspiration which is the best preparation for a true prophetic work. Four of them Jesus found at the Jordan, attracted by the preaching of John the Baptist. A fifth was evidently looking with them for the coming of the Messiah.[1] Two of them certainly, Philip and Peter, were familiar with the Greek language. The latter was a man of considerable means, lived in his own house, and thought he had given up a good deal to follow Christ. The father of James and John was able to keep hired servants, and to carry on his fishing operations on a somewhat extensive scale; and John had such relations with the High Priest as gave him, at a critical period in Christ's history, easy access to the palace.[2]

But if the disciples had open and unprejudiced minds, they do not appear to have possessed remarkable moral or spiritual genius. Peter and John do not show any indications of greatness of character prior to Christ's influence upon them. John, sharing with the other disciples their expectations of a temporal kingdom, ambitiously seeks a first place in it; passionate by nature, he would destroy by fire the Samaritan village which refuses its hospitality to his Lord; and, when he joins the band, possesses, with his brother James, a nature which earns for them from Christ the sobriquet of Sons of Thunder.[3] If John acquires his gentleness and tenderness from his intercourse with Jesus, Simon Peter acquires his courage from the same source. The incidents recorded by the Gospel in his career indicate a man by nature ardent, impulsive, unstable, untrustworthy. No one of the disciples could more truthfully have said than he, "By the grace of God I am what I am."[4]

We are, perhaps, liable to do these disciples some injustice by contrasting them not only with their Master, but with our naturally clearer understanding of his mission and his meaning; nevertheless it is certain that they were often obtuse and unreceptive, so much so at times as to draw upon

[1] If, as is generally supposed, Nathanael is to be identified with Bartholomew.
[2] See John i., 36-49; xii., 20; Acts viii., 30; x., 24, *et al.;* Luke iv., 38; Matt. xix., 27; Mark i., 20; John xviii., 16.
[3] Matt. xx., 20-24; Mark ix., 38; Luke ix., 54; Mark iii., 17.
[4] Matt. xiv., 28-30; John xiii., 6-9; John xviii., 10, with Matt. xxvi., 56; John xviii., 15, 17, 25-27; Acts x., 47, 48; Gal. ii., 11-13.

them his rebuke. Their prosaic natures stumbled over his poetical sayings. When he cautions them against the leaven of the Pharisees, they imagine that he is afraid of being poisoned; when he warns them of approaching spiritual conflict, they innocently produce two swords to show that they are armed; when he tries their faith by asking what shall be done to feed the five thousand, Andrew can think of nothing but the five loaves and two small fishes at hand; when he promises them a spiritual manifestation such as the unspiritual cannot receive, Thaddeus stumbles over the declaration with the question, "How wilt thou manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world?" when he tells them that he is going to the Father, Thomas replies, "We know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" These are not the utterances of quick-minded, spiritual, receptive souls. Spiritually as well as intellectually, they belong to the "plain people."

They were not even selected from the most moral of the community. Prominent among them was a despised tax-gatherer; less prominent, another whose previous identification with some one of the numerous turbulent factions which kept Palestine in a perpetual ferment earned for him the title of the Zealot. A third, Simon Peter, possessed the Oriental vices of profanity and falsehood, which, despite his long companionship with Jesus, revived, after he thought they were conquered, to overwhelm him with shame and confusion in the crisis-hour of his life. In short, in the selection of his apostles, as in the selection of the larger body of disciples from which they were chosen, Jesus seems to have acted upon the principle announced by himself, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." That even his powerful influence was not always sufficient to give victory to the better nature is made evident by the tragic story of Judas Iscariot.[1]

The mission which he gave to these disciples will be considered hereafter. It must suffice here simply to note the fact that in calling them to be his immediate disciples, the witnesses of his life, death, and resurrection, and the preachers of his Gospel both during his life and after his death, there is nothing in the Gospel account to indicate

[1] Matt. x., 4; Luke vi., 15; Mark xiv., 66–71.

that he conferred upon them any especial ecclesiastical authority.[1] He established no hierarchy, he gave them no authority over one another, and none over the Church; he prescribed for them neither ritual, creed, nor order of service; and he did not authorize them, certainly not in any utterance recorded in the Gospels, to appoint successors. Paul, who was not one of the twelve, and did not receive ordination from the twelve, claimed to be equally with them an Apostle, because equally with them, though in a different way, a witness to the resurrection of the Master.

There was, however, one absolute condition of membership in this little band, and one mission which it was to discharge. This condition was absolute faith in and loyalty to their Master; this mission was to bear testimony to him. Whatever he said they were to receive; whatever he commanded they were to obey. When the rich young ruler desired to join them, it was made a condition that he should reduce himself to their condition of poverty. When Peter protested that Christ should not wash his feet, Christ refused any explanation of his action, simply replying: "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." When James and John asked for office, he refused to make any promise whatever, save the promise of sharing with him in service and sacrifice. In this spirit of loyalty they were to be his heralds. They were sent, not to preach a new standard of morality, nor to reaffirm an old standard, but to preach that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. They were the forerunners of a king, the prophets of a Messiah, witnesses to the Christ.

[1] Some of my readers will think this statement inconsistent with such declarations as Matt. xvi., 18, 19; xviii., 18, and John xx., 22, 23. But, in my judgment, whatever authority is conferred by these utterances is conferred upon all the disciples of Christ. For the reasons for this opinion I must refer the student to my Commentaries.

CHAPTER XIV.—THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT[1]

Matthew v., vi., and vii.; Luke vi., 20-49

The notion that the Sermon on the Mount is a collection of *logia* of Jesus Christ, uttered at different times and on different occasions and brought together by Matthew, seems to me wholly incongruous with the structure of the discourse itself. This sermon is an ordination sermon, delivered after the selection of the Twelve to be the chosen companions of the Master, and his prophets and heralds. It is delivered primarily to the Twelve, secondarily to a great congregation which has flocked up the hillside and surrounds the speaker and this nucleus of his future Church. It is the most complete and comprehensive statement which Christ has afforded of the principles of the kingdom of God which he had come to establish upon the earth.

He begins this sermon with a note of blessing. Fourteen hundred years or more before, Moses had gone up into another mount to take the law from God—a mount sterile but grand, around whose top the lightning was playing, around which the music of the thunder was heard, while all was cloud-enfolded. Now, on a grassy slope, in the broad sunlight that streamed from the heavens above, the only music the music of the singing birds that flew through the air, and to which he pointed as an illustration of his Father's care, the new laws of the new kingdom were imparted. The first word of this discourse was like the sunlight and like the singing of the birds—a word of benediction. The first word of that discourse was a word of the awful grandeur of Jehovah.

Christ begins his discourse, then, by declaring the condition of happiness; and that condition is all bound up, according to Christ, in one word. We chiefly think they

[1] This lesson-paper is a reprint of one of a series of sermons on the Life of Christ given in Plymouth Church in 1888 and 1889, and published in the "Christian World Pulpit," and now revised for this volume.

are blessed *that have*. Christ says they are blessed that *are*. Not condition, acquisition, situation, give happiness, but character. And every phase of character brings its own peculiar blessing with it. Blessed are the poor in spirit: easy it is for them to yield allegiance to the God whose kingdom I have come to proclaim—easy for them to enter through the door of repentance, which is hard for the high-spirited. Blessed are the meek: not the man who grasps, not the man who is determined to get all he can and keep all he gets, not the man who is strenuous for his rights, but the man of meek and bearable disposition, is the man who really enjoys what this life has to furnish men. Blessed are the peacemakers: not the warriors of wrath whom the world exalts, not the men who have flung themselves into battle and fought for ambition or even for patriotism, but the men who, by conscious endeavor or the unconscious influence of their character, are cementing together men in one great brotherhood of love—they are blessed, they are to be called the children of God. Blessed, not the great scholars and theologians who have studied the tomes and battled in the controversies of the centuries that they may find out who and what is God and tell us, but the pure in heart, in whose souls there is no lustful thought, whose translucent natures lie before God as the placid lake before the stars in the heavens, and reflect God in the quietude and placidity of their nature.

Blessed is character—this is Christ's first note. How shall this character be obtained? The most common method of making character has been to square it to certain laws and regulations previously framed. This was Pharisaism in the first century, Legalism in the Middle Ages, Puritanism in these later days. To lay down a law of conduct, and then try to adjust character and life to that law of conduct—this is the conception of righteousness which to-day in America, after eighteen centuries of Christ's teaching, a great many men entertain. What is the law of truth? "I will go just so far as that law requires me, and no further." What is unselfishness? "I will hold my hand from whatever form of selfishness law—moral law, God's law—prohibits, but no further." "No!" says Christ; "unless your righteousness exceeds the

righteousness attained by any such method as this, you cannot even come into the kingdom of God." And he illustrates this proposition by five illustrations. What is the law for the regulation of passion—Thou shalt not kill? thou shalt not use thine arm to do a wrong to thy neighbor's life or his person? "No!" says Christ. "He that is angry with his brother without a cause is a murderer. Character that does not go deep enough to control the ebullient passion within is no character that carries blessedness with it." "You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt not commit adultery; but I tell you that the man who simply holds his passion so far in check has not the blessedness I speak of. The evil thought nesting in the imagination carries not only stain but wretchedness with it." "You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt not forswear thyself; thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; thou shalt not overstep this reasonable rule of reverence; but I say unto you more than that: Thou shalt not swear by heaven, nor by earth, nor by thy head; for whatsoever hath in it more than simply yea and nay, simplest profession of simplest affirmation or denial, comes of evil—comes, that is, of the secret sense of personal distrust." "You have heard what is the law that is to regulate us in the punishment of offenders. You have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." Men have in our time reviled this as a cruel code. No; it was a merciful one; for it restrains men from following their natural impulse, which is always to make vengeance exceed the wrong to be revenged. One man calls his neighbor a liar; in return the neighbor strikes a blow; thereupon the other neighbor strikes a heavier blow, and each blow leads to a heavier blow than the other. The law of Moses restrained men from such vengeance. But Christ says, "This law of restraint, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, this holding yourself back from an even-handed punishment of wrong-doing, is not enough. I tell you to cure evil by love." You cannot make yourself right by trying to square your conduct or your life to an outer rule or regulation. If you try to do it, you will not be happy. Let any man with passion in him try to hold his hand back from wrath, or with lustful imagination in him try to live a pure life, or with hate in

his soul try to square his life to the golden rule of conduct—he will not be happy. The blessedness that Christ promises is the blessedness of a soul filled with that divine impulse of love which was in Christ himself.

There is one motive that perhaps more than any other leads us to attempt righteousness. It is the approbation of our fellow-men. And Christ says (this as the third point in his sermon): "It is not enough that you do that which other men think is right, and because other men think it to be right. You are generous. Is it because you are really liberal of heart, or because men will see what you give? You pray. Is it because you really desire to commune with your Father, or do you desire not to be thought undevout? You fast. Is it because your soul is really so burdened with sin that you cannot eat, or do you wish to be counted as religious?" It is not wrong to subscribe that men may honor you; but when you have paid your five cents, or your fifty dollars, and got the approving glance of your fellow-men, you have paid for the goods, and the goods have been delivered to you: it is a commercial transaction—that is all. There is only one way of happy, blessed living. It is the way of a man whose whole soul is consecrated to the service of God in service of his fellow-men.

So Christ says, in the fourth place: "Be not double-minded"—for this is the meaning of the word rendered "Be not careful." Do not go into life thinking, "I shall spend so much time for food, raiment, and earthly forces, and so much for God and the service of my fellow-men." Give yourself to the life of love, in the store, in the kitchen, in the office, in the street, wherever you are. Count life a place in which you are to show how much you can impart, not how much you can get. Bestow, and even as you give men will give back to you—freely, liberally, largely, according to the measure wherewith you give; and your heavenly Father will provide for all that you have need of. "Shall I be rich?" Perhaps not. Have you need of riches? "Shall I live in a brownstone front?" Perhaps not. Do you need to live in a brownstone front? "Shall I be more famous than my neighbor?" Perhaps not. Do you need to be more famous than your neighbor? But he who consecrates his life to the service of humanity

receives back from the open hand of man, because back from the open hand of God, all that he needs for this life, and the blessedness that comes through love. Love giving generously receives in return joyfully.

This is well, says some one, for those who are made with this temperament, but how for me? I have not a peaceful temperament. How shall I make myself a peacemaker? I have not the pure temperament. How shall I control the lustful imagination? I have not the equable temperament. How shall I restrain my passion? I can hold my hand from striking my neighbor, but how my heart from hating? And Christ answers finally that question: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

I remember, as a boy, sitting by the fireside of a little country inn, up near Dead River in Maine, and hearing some men discuss the Sermon on the Mount. Rough fellows they were; and one of them, scoffing at Christianity, said, "Thou shalt love thine enemy—nonsense! It is not in human nature." He was right. It is not in human nature; but it was in Christ's nature, and it is in the divine nature. And it is in the divine nature to impart it through Christ to those who claim it.

The close and climax of this sermon is the promise of Christ that any man, seeing this as something better than human nature, and desiring, can get it, not by kneeling and praying for it, and expecting it to be poured into him, but by following the word and the example and the teaching of the Master. Not by saying, "Lord! Lord!" but by doing the will of the Father which is in heaven.

How shall we live happy lives? By being worthy men and women. How shall we be worthy men and women? Not by trying laboriously to conform our lives to any law, human or divine; not by trying to do what men will praise us for, or even, I might almost say, what God will praise us for, for the sake of such praising; but by seeking to be worthy to be called the children of God, by giving ourselves with undeviating, unflinching, unaltering consecration to this one purpose of making other men wiser, better, happier than they would have been but for our existence; and by seeking in this way and by this process to come nearer every day to Him who says of Himself, "God is love."

CHAPTER XV.—ELEMENTS OF CHRIST'S POPULARITY

Luke vii., 1–58; viii., 1–3

Jesus Christ was one of the most popular preachers in history. Without advantages which often confer a factitious popularity upon the preacher, without a great cathedral, fine music, a fashionable following; without any of the other, and what we may call accidental, advantages which often legitimately add to the popularity of great preachers; without the use of rhetorical, elocutionary, or dramatic arts, and certainly without any of those vices which sometimes make a public speaker dishonorably popular; without pandering to the people's pride and prejudice—Jesus Christ attracted great throngs wherever he went. Once the people tried to crown him king; more than once he deliberately put this popularity away from him, by declaring to the crowds that gathered to listen to him that to listen was nothing without obedience, and that to obey was impossible without self-sacrifice. The chapter which has been selected for our study to-day both gives evidence of his popularity and gives some illustrations of it. I propose in this article first to consider what were some of the elements of that popularity, and then to point out how the incidents in this chapter furnished illustration of those elements.

In Jesus Christ's teaching, religion and philanthropy—that is, reverence for God and practical love of and service for man—were inseparably joined together. This has by no means been always the case in the history of the world. Its temples have not always been fountains of charity and kindness. It is true that the laws of Moses abounded with philanthropic precepts, but it is also true that the Pharisaic Church had forgotten this aspect of the Mosaic law. The usual treatment of disease illustrates the inhumanity of man in Palestine in the first century. Disease was habitually regarded as a curse of

God, and alienated the sufferer from human sympathy. The blind man was supposed to be suffering for his own or his parents' sin; the leper was an outcast, and the pious rabbi declared that he was to be stoned if he drew near to men; the lunatic was left to wander friendless and alone among the tombs. At such a time as this Christ came to preach and practice a philanthropic religion. He told the fishermen how to cast their nets that they might get a great catch of fish; he fed the hungry people, too famished and faint to return to their homes after a day's preaching; he interrupted the synagogue service to heal the paralyzed; he reached forth his hand to touch the unclean leper and make him whole; he stopped the funeral upon the street to restore the only son to his mother, and she a widow.

Nor was this sympathy confined to those who were physically suffering. The Pharisees belonged to a class and spoke to a class. Jesus Christ came from the common people and spoke to the common people. Long before Burns he taught that "A man's a man for a' that." He declared that the rich man who cared not for the suffering poor was worse than the beggar that lay at his door; that the successful man who accumulated wealth for his own self-indulgent pleasure was a fool; that the publican seeking to be delivered from sin was more acceptable than the Pharisee who boasted of his righteousness; that to do righteously in daily life was better than to be punctilious in temple sacrifices. He practiced what he preached, gathered his disciples from the common people, lived among them, shared their life.

The unphilanthropic and class religion of the Pharisees was ascetic. To the one fast of the Mosaic law they had added a number of others. The devout Pharisee fasted on the fourth day of the month, because on that day Nebuchadnezzar had captured Jerusalem; on the fifth day of the month, because on that day the Temple had been burned; on the seventh day of the month, because on that day the Jewish Governor of Jerusalem had been murdered; on the tenth day of the month, because on that day Jerusalem had been besieged by the Chaldeans; on the fifth day of each week, because on that day Moses went up to the Mount for the Law; and on the second day of each week,

because on that day Moses brought the Law down from the Mount. Thus religion sat in sackcloth and ashes. Men were taught that to be religious was to be sad of visage and thin of flesh. Christ swept all this away. Save in that great wrestling with temptation in the wilderness, he himself never fasted; he counseled his disciples not to fast, and he told them, if they did, to keep their fasting secret. He came, as he himself said, eating and drinking; and though men railed at him as a wine-bibber and a drinker, he still went on eating and drinking. He compared God's kingdom to the rejoicings of a marriage-feast; welcomed the return of the sinner in the parable, not with penances, but with feasting, music, and dancing; welcomed the coming of the publican into his companionship, not with a fast for the sins of the past, but with a feasting because those sins were abandoned. Pharisees were shocked to find the teacher of religion put aside all the conventional and funereal aspects which they had identified with the religious life, but the common people liked joy better than sorrow, and welcomed a minister who came with gladness in his heart and a song on his lips.

If religion in the first century was largely ascetic, it was still more rigorous and burdensome—a religion of petty rules and regulations. Religion as taught by the Pharisees seemed to be perpetually saying to mankind, "Thou shalt not." A striking illustration of this restrictive character is afforded by the laws respecting cleanness and uncleanness. A great variety of objects were declared unclean; so many that there was always danger that one should pollute himself in the daily contacts of life. Out of this grew an elaborate ritual of washing, prescribed to the last detail. Not less restrictive and burdensome were the regulations respecting devotion. The prayers must be repeated in a certain manner, and with certain gestures and postures, or all was in vain. This whole notion of religion as a restriction Christ resolutely and vigorously condemned. He called his disciples unto freedom, and he exercised the freedom himself to which he summoned them. He touched the unclean leper when he might have healed him by a word; raised the dead boy from the bier by the hand, when he might have called him back to life as he did Lazarus, by a single command; disregarded the elaborate laws

respecting ablution; and when asked by his disciples for a form of prayer, gave them a prayer as brief as it is beautiful, and as simple as it is comprehensive, which he did not make a form, though we have since made it so.

Couple with this his disregard of traditional theology, his simplification of the religious life, his comprehension of it all in the one word Love, his inspiration of hope in hearts dulled by despair, and his teaching that God is the Father of the whole human race from whom every child may receive help and hope. His sympathy for men was so broad and deep that neither class nor ceremony, nor the lack of either, nor even personal sinfulness, could debar the soul from that sympathy. In these things we get a suggestion of some of the elements in the character and teaching of this new prophet, whose ministry filled the people with enthusiasm and the Pharisees with amazement and indignation.

The five incidents in the Scripture passage suggested for our study for to-day illustrate the breadth of this sympathy of Christ. It overleaped all barriers of race. When the Jews came to intercede with Jesus for a Roman centurion, whose servant, dear to him, was sick, they pleaded for this pagan, saying, "He is worthy because he loveth our nation, and has built us a synagogue." But Christ, perceiving in the centurion's appeal for help – "I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; say only a word, and my servant shall be healed"—the evidence at once of his humility and his faith, declared that, though he was a Roman, he was the superior of the Israelites who had so patronizingly commended him. In Paris, when the funeral passes down the street, the bystanders stop and doff their hats until at least the hearse has gone by. In Palestine they fall into the train and swell the procession to the grave. Strange was the meeting between the two bands outside the city of Nain: the one, a band of mourners following the bier to its grave, swelled by "much people" who had joined the procession; the other, the incoming band of Christ and his disciples, full of the joy of the anticipated kingdom which he had come to proclaim. But the forces of that kingdom were not so great but that he could stop in the highway, approach the bier, speak to the dead who lay upon it, and turn the funeral procession into one as joyous as that which it had met. Some attempt had

apparently been made to create a rivalry between the disciples of John and of Jesus. The methods of the two prophets were, as I have already pointed out, radically different; and John, shut up in the Castle of Machærus and beginning to despair, sent his disciples to learn whether this Jesus whom he had baptized was really the Messiah or not. The unstinted eulogy which Christ pronounced in the ears of all the people upon John the Baptizer afforded to them a new illustration of the sympathy of this prophet, who could see the heart of a great truth behind unwise methods of expression and imperfect plans of reform. To the generous spirit which perceives the good, no matter how roughly it may be clothed, the heart of the common people always responds. Most striking of all these illustrations is that afforded by the incident of his anointing by the woman "which was a sinner." Notwithstanding eighteen centuries of Christian teaching, there are few of Christ's disciples who have any word of sympathy or hope for a fallen woman. Who has not longed to know what were the words of Jesus Christ which brought the penitential tears to this woman's eyes and inspired her hands to essay the sacred office of anointing? Those words have been lost, but the incident remains, one of the most pathetic in Scripture, to show the depth, the tenderness, and the comprehensiveness of Christ's sympathy, which welcomed the touch of the sinful as well as of the ceremonially unclean, if perhaps thereby forgiveness and healing might be imparted. It was a novel sight in Palestine to see women accompanying a religious teacher, ministering to him and received by him into the circle of his disciples; for Pharisaism scoffed at womanhood. To teach religion to a woman was regarded as hardly better than to teach it to a pagan; to receive women into the infant Church on terms of approximate equality with men was to shock all the prejudices of the best society, but it was also to arouse all the enthusiasm which lay dormant and awaiting resurrection in the hearts of the peasantry.

Thus the same acts which excited and united all the class elements of hostility in a bitter campaign against the Christ, by their appeal to that in man which is deeper than ceremonial or convention, aroused in the hearts of the common people an enthusiasm for this prophet of faith and hope and love.

CHAPTER XVI.—THE EVOLUTION OF THE KINGDOM

Luke viii, 4–15; xi., 14–36; Matt. xii., 46–50; xiii., 1–53

It is a mistake to say, as sometimes has been said, that Jesus Christ, or that Paul, was an evolutionist, for the word evolution is one of modern origin, and indicates a purely modern form of thought. But I believe it is profoundly true that the teachings both of Jesus Christ and of Paul are not only consistent with the modern doctrine of evolution, but are best interpreted by using that doctrine as a clue in the study of those teachings. By the doctrine of evolution, as applied to spiritual truth, I mean that the kingdom of God does not come suddenly, with observation, and by a series of miraculous interventions; but gradually, by an orderly process, from small beginnings to large results, from lower and simpler forms to forms that are higher and more complex. If any one supposes that the doctrine of evolution means that this growth, either in the physical or the spiritual realm, is without opposition, antagonism, disappointments, deteriorations, decay, I think he misunderstands the doctrine of evolution. However this may be, it is clear that this growth, as Christ interpreted it, has to meet such opposition and has to suffer such disappointments.

Whether the parables which are collected in the thirteenth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, to which also one should be added from the fourth chapter of Mark,[1] were all spoken at one time by Jesus Christ, and constituted practically one discourse, or were spoken at different times and have been gathered together by Matthew because they have one and the same theme running through them and connecting them, it is not important here to inquire; they certainly are thus connected by one

[1] Mark iv., 26–29.

theme, and it is with that theme that we have to do to-day. That theme is the evolution of the kingdom.

The kingdom of God, then, as Christ interprets it to us in these parables, is like a seed cast into the ground which groweth secretly, the sower knoweth not how. This is the first truth in these parables. Whether in the individual, in the church, or in the community, spiritual life is a growth. It did not in the Bible burst full-orbed upon humanity at Mount Sinai. The doctrine of the Trinity was not revealed in the creation when God said, "Let *us* make man in our image." The consummation of the moral law is not embodied in the Ten Commandments, which forbid the grosser infractions of the social order. The revelation of God in Christ Jesus is clearer than the revelation on Mount Sinai, and the ideal of human life in the example of Christ Jesus is a higher ideal than that contained in the Ten Commandments. The Bible is the history of the growth of a seed; the history of a dawning light. The light is clearer in the Psalms of David than in the laws of Moses; in the prophecies of Isaiah than in the Psalms of David; in the teachings of Christ than in the prophecies of Isaiah. That which is true of the Bible is true of the individual soul. It does not come into the perfection of spiritual life at conversion; it is to grow both in grace and in knowledge, to learn more of God and of life, to be both wiser and better as it is older. And that which is true of the individual is true of the Church: for its ideal it is to look, not backward, but forward; it is to run a race, and the goal is before it. The nineteenth century is wiser and better than the sixteenth, and the sixteenth century was wiser and better than the fourth. It is true that Jesus Christ is always the ideal both of the individual and of the Church, but it is also true that both the individual and the Church are to grow up into Christ Jesus, and are to continue to grow until they come to a perfect manhood in his likeness.

And this growth is accomplished by human endeavor; it comes of seed-sowing. The common statement that time cures all things is not true. Time cures nothing. Time only gives us an opportunity to do something for the sick and the sinful. It is only as the sower went forth to sow in the first century, it is only as other sowers have

gone forth in the centuries which have followed, holding the same seed in their hand and casting it into the furrow, that the harvest of righteousness can grow. And how it grows depends alike upon him who sows and him who receives, upon the seed and the soil.

Nor is this growth of the kingdom without opposition. There are evil seeds as well as good ones; enemies to righteousness as well as friends of righteousness. There is an evolution of wickedness as well as of virtue; a progress of decay as well as of growth, and the end of that progress is death. So, as the world grows wiser and better, it also grows wiser and wickeder. Genius furnishes instruments for war as well as for peace; selfishness assumes new and more skillful forms; oppression, vanquished in one guise, reappears in another. Not only are there tares in every wheat-field, but the same sun and the same rain minister to both, and both grow together. Is the world growing better? Yes! and also worse; for better and worse go together side by side.

The growth of this kingdom is not to be measured by the littleness of its beginnings. Who could have guessed Christianity by looking into the manger at Bethlehem, or the Reformation by seeing Luther studying the chained Bible in his monastery, or Methodism from the little band of derided students at Oxford, or New England, and the greater New England overspreading the Northwest, from the Mayflower? The seed indeed is the least of all seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest among herbs.

Because this growth is twofold, because it must meet with hostility, therefore agitation is the condition of it. Like a seed in the ground is the kingdom of God, but it is also like yeast in the flour. The Prince of Peace comes bringing a sword and calling for war. Virtue and truth have nothing to fear from agitation. Agitation is the sign of life. It is always falsehood which seeks to repress free discussion. It is always iniquity which demands to be let alone.

But the end of this battle will be worth all that it costs—all that it costs to the individual of self-sacrifice, all that it costs to the community in blood and treasure. Protestantism paid none too high price in the bloody persecutions

of the seventeenth century for liberty of thought. The Puritan was well paid for his expatriation; the free and united Nation is worth the price we paid for it in the Civil War. Liberty, righteousness, purity, truth—these are indeed treasures hid, but worth to him who discovers them all that he has; bought oftentimes only at a great price, but never at a price too great.

In God's kingdom the process of seed-sowing and the process of harvesting are one. Spring and autumn overlap one another and constitute a strangely commingled season. The plow which opens the furrow, the hopper which drops in the seed, the hoe which cultivates the grain, and the cradle which gathers it, work as one instrument. To change the figure, time, like a great net, is gathering us all in together to the eternal shore, small and great, good and bad, living and dead. When the growths are finished, when the wheat has come to its head, and the tares also, when men have made their choice between the earthly and the heavenly treasure, when the processes of time for good and for evil are completed, then will come the judgment with its tremendous issues, the good gathered into vessels, the bad cast away.

CHAPTER XVII.—SIGNS OF CHRIST'S MESSIAHSHIP

Mark iv., 35–41; v., 1–43; Matt. ix., 27–34

There are three ways in which we may approach the miraculous events recorded in the New Testament. We may assume, with Robert Elsmere, that "miracles do not happen." In that case we of course dismiss these events altogether from the narrative, or endeavor to account for them by some naturalistic interpretation, as by supposing that, under the influence of Christ's teaching of the five thousand, those who had provisions gave to those who had none, and so all were supplied. Or we may say, with Huxley and Renan, that the question whether these events really took place is a question to be determined by historical evidence, but that, the events being extraordinary, the evidence must also be extraordinary. We may then proceed to examine that evidence, leaving our decision as to Christ's character and his claims upon us to be determined by that examination. This may be called, perhaps, the scientific method—scientific, though not really philosophical, since it leaves out of view the most important factor, namely, the character of Jesus Christ himself. If Christian believers generally pursued this method, I am inclined to think that they would reach Mr. Huxley's conclusion respecting the miracles—the Scotch verdict, "not proven." It is true that the historical evidence is so clear and cogent that it would be quite convincing as to any ordinary events; but these events are so extraordinary that a scientist who considers the evidence without taking account of the extraordinary character of Jesus Christ and the revelation he professed to bring to man, might well doubt whether the historical evidence established the remarkable phenomena. There is a third, and I believe a much more rational, method of approaching this question. Let me try to state it.

The student pursuing this method opens his New Tes-

tament and reads the four Gospels. What first and most impresses him in this story is, not the remarkable incidents known as miracles, but the remarkable man concerning whom this story is told. It is clearly no fancy portrait. The evidence of its historical reality, which I cannot go into here, is such as to satisfy the most incredulous that Jesus Christ lived, and that he was such a man and lived such a life as is here portrayed. Nor is the portrait idealized. It is clear that these Galilean peasants were alike incapable of inventing or of embellishing the story. There are, on the contrary, considerable indications that they failed to understand their Master, and have marred, not improved, the picture by their treatment of it. The student then begins to study this unique life and character. He finds that this Jesus Christ was himself the central object of his teaching. Whatever theory the student may form as to the inherent nature of this remarkable man and his relation to the Eternal Father, he cannot doubt that Jesus claimed to come from the Father, to be the Father's well-beloved Son, to have come into the world to manifest the Father, and to bring to sinful men a revelation of the Father's love and gracious help. Is it possibly true that the great Unknown has revealed himself to men in this one unique human life? that Jesus Christ is not only a revealer of truth by his words, but a revelation of a Person by his life? The more the student studies this character the more he believes in an affirmative answer to this question. He at last assumes it, as at least a hypothetical answer. He forms, let us say, the hypothesis that God, whom philosophy and much of religion have regarded as the Unknown, if not the Unknowable, has manifested himself to men in his works and in the noble deeds and inspired thoughts of the great and good of all ages, and in the aspirations, coming we know not whence, in our own souls in their highest experiences, and has also revealed himself pre-eminently in this Jesus of Nazareth; that the hope of the world for such a revelation, itself the impulse of all true worship, which is a seeking after God, has its fulfillment in this Jesus of Nazareth; that, in a word, he is the Christ. With this hypothetical faith he re-reads the Gospels again. The miracles, upon this hypothesis, no longer seem extraordinary to him. It would rather be

extraordinary if there were none. It does not seem strange to him that from such a man power should scintillate in forms of manifestation not without remote resemblances in manifestations of power by other sons of God, but unparalleled in the history of mankind, as this Man is unparalleled among the sons of men.

Still further pursuing this train of thought, he asks himself, What is a miracle? Discarding all theological and modern definitions, he goes to the Gospels themselves to see what miracles, as there recorded, are. He finds four words used to designate them; namely, Works, Wonders, Powers, and Signs—the latter being the translation of the word sometimes transliterated miracle. A miracle, then, is a *work* generally of beneficence, calculated to arouse *wonder* in the beholder, manifesting *power* more than human, and serving as a *sign* of divine authority. If there was such a man as Jesus Christ, if he was a unique revelation of God, if he came to bring to sinful men a message and a ministry of forgiveness and of cure, how could it be that there should not be miracles, thus defined? how possible that he should not do *works* of love, *wonders* to that age and to all ages, manifesting the *power* which resided in him, and serving to all men as a *sign* that he was what he claimed to be?

Dropping for a moment the impersonal form and expressing my own faith: I believe in the miracles because I believe in Jesus Christ, not in Jesus Christ because I believe in the miracles. The foundation of my faith in the Gospels is not the works He did, but He Himself; and I believe the works because I can believe anything good and great of Him. In short, accepting His own alternative, I believe that He was in the Father and the Father in Him: I do not believe Him merely for the works' sake.

Let me, then, ask the reader for a moment to try to take this point of view. Let him accept, simply as a working hypothesis, this Christian faith, that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself," that the Unknown is Love, and that this Unknown, infinite in love, has come to earth that in a human life he might manifest that love to men, and lift them out of themselves, and bring them to the Father. If the reader once accepts this hypothesis, does it seem impossible to him that such an One should

manifest his power in works of love that awaken the wonder of his friends; that he should still the tempest, should quiet, calm, cure the lunatic; should conquer disease, should even open the gates of death and call back the dead to life again? If he was the Son of God, if he had a message worthy of such an authentication, why should we think it impossible that the needed authentication should be given?

For the message needed authentication. Consider the two great burdens which the world of men had long borne, and from which they could get relief only by an authenticated revelation.

Long had the world stood before death appalled and sorrow-stricken. In vain it had endeavored to look beyond the sod—it could see nothing. Its noblest prophets and noblest apostles could tell it nothing. There was a vague hope of some future life—nothing more. Even Socrates, noblest philosopher of Greece, could offer to his disciples, as they gathered at his dying bed, no better comfort than the direction, "Go, search Greece for a charmer; it is a wide world; and perhaps somewhere you will find some one who will give you comfort and consolation." And the other burden was even greater and harder to be borne—the sense of an irreparable past, the sense of an evil done that could not be undone, the sense of a great gap between the soul and God that could not be bridged. In the temples of pagan religions everywhere you find the same cry of men—that cry which comes to us from India in her song: "O Varuna, have mercy! O Varuna, have mercy!" And no answer from Varuna; no song of triumph from the temple. For the history of paganism has been always the same—humanity floundering in the slough of despond, with never a song on its lips and never a gleam of hope on its brow.

Now there comes to the world One who says, "I can answer your problems. I can tell you what there is after death: a land of glory and an angel throng. I can tell you whether God will have mercy on you: he is a forgiving Father." This messenger does not tell us what he *thinks*, nor what he *hopes*. He brings his message, so he says, from the heavens. He knows that there is a glory beyond the grave. He knows that there is a hand of God

outstretched to lift this burden on our back that is sinking us in this slough of despond.

It is not enough for us to have the intuition of a poet guessing that there is a hope beyond the grave when we stand before the grave in which our best beloved lies. It is not enough for us to have a Jewish poet guessing that there is a mercy in the great Father when we are bowed down beneath the burden of an irreparable past, and know not what God can or will do for us. We need an assurance that will speak to us of life and hope. And this Messenger, that brings this word out of the unknown, brings an authentication of his divine authority. He comes clad with a power that shows itself despite him. The mob parts before him, awed by the majesty of his presence; the very hem of his garment heals. He works no wonders merely to stir men's admiration; but power flashes from him as electric sparks from the Leyden jar.

Whether a prophet eighteen centuries ago stilled a tempest, cured a lunatic, raised a widow's son, are not in themselves important questions; but it is transcendently important that we should know that in these Lessons we are studying the life of one surcharged with divinity and bringing to us and to all the world an authoritative revelation of pardon and of hope.

CHAPTER XVIII.—THE COMMISSION OF THE TWELVE

Mark vi., 1–6; Matt. ix., 35–38; x., 1–42; xi., 1

In a previous chapter[1] I have spoken of Christ's selection of the Twelve, of the principles upon which he selected them, and of their personal character. To these Twelve he gave two commissions—one while he was still living with them, the other just before his ascension. It is with the first of these commissions that we have to do to-day.

The demands on his time had become so great that he could no longer respond to them unaided. His disciples had been with him certainly for over a year; he sent them forth two by two to heal and to preach in the villages, while he confined his ministry to the larger cities.[2] It is a mistake to suppose, as it has sometimes been supposed, that the methods which Christ prescribed for the Twelve in this provincial ministry in Galilee are authoritatively imposed upon the Church for all time. Methods adapted to one age and condition may be very ill-adapted to another But there are certain fundamental principles involved in and implied by the directions which Christ gave to the Twelve in this their first missionary circuit, which, if not universally applicable, certainly throw light upon the methods to be pursued and the work to be done by the disciples of Christ in all ages and in all countries.

In the first place, then, we observe that Christ selected men for the specific work of preaching the Gospel. Not all who believed in him were to become preachers. Some he forbade to do so, telling them to return to their homes and go on with their daily life. Others he commanded to leave their daily vocation and devote themselves wholly to the ministry. The example of Christ is, therefore, an authority for the statement that it is legitimate to appoint

[1] Chap. XIII. [2] Compare Luke ix., 6. with Matt. xi., 1.

special men for the special work of the Gospel ministry. It is true that Christ laid upon all men the duty of proclaiming their principles, but he did not leave the proclamation of those principles dependent upon such chance occasions as men occupied in other professions might find. On the contrary, from the many disciples who loved and honored him, he selected a few upon whom he laid the duty of making the preaching of his Gospel their life-work.

But he did not organize these men into a priestly order. They were prophets, not priests. The distinction is important. The priests of Judaism were the children of a particular tribe, and the descendants of a particular family in that tribe. No one could perform priestly functions who was not in the order of priestly succession. These priests were supported by regular, formal, and established contributions; were directed to conduct the public worship; were intrusted with all the sacrificial ceremonies of the Jewish Church; had the exclusive right of passing beyond the rail which separated the court of the priests from the outer courts; were in a true sense representatives of God to the people, and mediators between the people and God. But there also grew up in Palestine under the Old Testament another order—the prophetic order. These prophets belonged to no line of succession; to no special tribe or family; received no consecration, no anointing; were set apart by no ceremony; ministered in no temple; were not separated from the laity by rail, or wall, or garb; never offered sacrifices. They were not priests, they were laymen. Their function was not to mediate between the people and God, but to teach the people truth about God, duty, life. Now, Christ appointed no priesthood. The priesthood is a Jewish, not a Christian, office. There was no line of succession provided for in the old prophetic order, and none hinted at in Christ's prophetic order; no authorized and established support given to the prophets, and none to the Apostles; no hierarchical authority, no sacred and exclusive duty, laid upon the Hebrew prophets; none upon the Christian Apostles. They were simply twelve ordinary folk, gathered by their Master, first to learn of him, and then to repeat upon the housetop what they had heard in the ear. To my mind it is impossible to reconcile the notion of a continuing priesthood with the

teaching of Jesus Christ. Under the Jewish system only the priest could enter the sacred precincts of the Temple, only the High Priest the Holy of Holies where God was supposed to dwell. This was wholly foreign to the teaching of Jesus Christ. He taught that God is the universal Father, that we are all God's children; that there need be no mediator between the Father and his child; that no altar-rail can separate between the arms of the Everlasting Love and the poor and the needy whom God loves; that there is need neither of priest nor of bloody sacrifice to open a door to the heart of God that his children may enter in. The very Gospel which the Apostles were appointed to preach was that all this belonged to an ancient order, that the time was ripe for teaching that every man is a child of God, and that for every man the way is opened to the heart of his heavenly Father.

This prophetic apostolic order was made wholly dependent upon the voluntary subscription of the people for its support. The Twelve were to take no money in their purse, no provisions, not even two garments; they were to go from house to house, trusting the hospitality of those to whom they ministered, and trusting to them alone. Doubtless there are disadvantages in a dependent ministry, but the dangers are incomparably less than the dangers in an independent ministry. In spite of the dependence of the Protestant clergy on the voluntary free-will offerings of the congregation, I venture to affirm that there are no ministers in the world and no class of men in America who are more thoroughly and conscientiously independent of public opinion than the Protestant ministers in these United States. They are more ready to oppose the current sentiment of their congregation than are lawyers to antagonize the prejudices of their clients, or doctors the prejudices of their patients, or merchants the prejudices of their customers, or politicians the prejudices of their constituents, or even newspaper editors the prejudices of their readers. And in no Established Church in the world are the preachers more frank and courageous in their utterances than are the ministers in the unestablished churches in free America.

The ministry which Christ thus organized was an itinerant ministry. The Twelve were to travel two by two, from town to town, preaching the Gospel. Subsequently

a similar appointment was made of seventy to fulfill a similar mission in Perea. They also constituted an itinerant ministry; they also were to travel from town to town carrying the good news of the kingdom. It does not, I think, follow from this that the ministry of the Church of Christ is always to be itinerant, but it does follow that it is always to be an aggressive and missionary ministry. No organization is a Church of Christ which does not go forth to teach those that are without the Glad-Tidings of Christ's Gospel. He who bade his disciples follow him declared of himself that he came to seek as well as to save that which was lost. He compared his kingdom to a wedding-feast whose host sent his messengers out into the highways and the hedges to compel the poor to come in and partake of it. Missions are not an incident of the Christian Church. The Christian Church exists for the sake of missions; missionary activity is the very end of its being.

And this ministry of the Twelve was to be a philanthropic ministry. Preaching and healing were to go together. The same love which ministers to the spirit will minister to the body. We cannot divide man into departments and treat the physical organism as though it were independent of the spiritual, and the spiritual as though it were independent of the physical. The modern church, which feeds, and clothes, and medicates, and teaches, and preaches, is ministering in the spirit of the Master, provided it never forgets that the spiritual is more important than the intellectual, as the intellectual is more important than the physical; that, in other words, the animal is for the social and the social is for the spiritual; or, again, in Christ's own words, that "the life is more than meat and the body more than raiment."

Such are some, by no means all, of the universal principles illustrated in Christ's first commission to the first heralds of the kingdom of God.

CHAPTER XIX.—THE BREAD OF LIFE

Mark vi., 30–56; John vi., 22–71

The popularity of Jesus Christ reached its climax in his feeding of the five thousand on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. The people in their enthusiasm would have crowned him as their king in spite of himself, and compelled him to lead them in an attack upon their Roman oppressors. Immediately following this event, Christ preached a sermon in the synagogue at Capernaum which, from its theme, is known as the Sermon on the Bread of Life. It produced a very remarkable effect: it put an end to his popularity. Those who had followed him with enthusiasm abandoned him, and so great was the falling off that he turned sadly to his twelve familiar friends and asked them if they also were going to leave him. The popularity which he thus put away never revived. Indeed, this sermon at Capernaum was substantially the end of his popular ministry in Galilee. Immediately after preaching it he retired, with his twelve friends, first to Phœnicia and afterwards to the vicinity of Cæsarea Philippi, and occupied himself in giving them private instructions respecting their conduct in the future kingdom. It was as though the effect of his sermon had been to confirm his conviction that the kingdom of God was not to be set up on the earth in his lifetime, and that he must make haste to instruct others to carry on the work after he was gone.

When we read this discourse in the light of the subsequent history, it is somewhat difficult to see why it should have produced the effect which it did produce. The gist of the sermon was that his disciples must feed on him—must, as he expressed it, eat his flesh and drink his blood—or they could have no life in them. The figure is strange and enigmatical at the best, and our difficulty of interpreting it is still further enhanced by two considerations. A year and a half or two years after this discourse Jesus instituted the Last Supper, where he repeated in words as

well as in act the same figure, and almost immediately thereafter was put to a cruel death. We read this discourse at Capernaum in the light of this subsequent history, and cannot fail to modify our interpretation by reason of that history. There is, indeed, ground for so doing. It may well be said that the discourse was prophetic, that Christ had in mind these events, and that we are to have them in mind also. Nevertheless, the first canon of interpretation of any address is that we must understand how the auditors would have understood it, even though we see a larger meaning than they saw. It is not easy for us, instructed by later history, to understand how the uninstructed auditors at Capernaum would have understood this discourse. Moreover, the discourse is not only read in the light of subsequent history; the report of it was written in the light of that history. There is small reason for supposing that John has given us a verbatim report of this discourse. The ancient historians were accustomed to give in the form of direct discourse what is really their abstract, and often their interpretative abstract, of the original. Indeed, this is not infrequently the custom of modern historians. Numerous illustrations of it may be found in Macaulay. It is inherently probable that John pursued this course. The Sermon on the Bread of Life, as it is reported in his Gospel, can easily be read in five or six minutes. It is hardly probable that the discourse took no longer time than that in the delivery. Presumptively, therefore, we have a report of this sermon or address written out after the light thrown upon it by the Last Supper and the crucifixion; presumptively, the interpretation of that discourse afforded by those events has colored John's report of the original.

Bearing these facts in mind, and recognizing a consequent difficulty of any absolute and complete interpretation, let us consider what, in view of all the circumstances, is the central truth in this Sermon on the Bread of Life.

1. I think we may dismiss with very little consideration the notion that Christ's words are to be taken literally; that his flesh and blood were literally eaten and drunken at the Last Supper, and that they reappear miraculously whenever the bread and wine are blessed by the priest in our own time. We may dismiss this theory, widely as it

has been entertained, because Christ says explicitly and in terms that such literal eating, if it were possible, would be of no advantage. "You are not to eat," he says, "as your fathers did eat manna and are dead;" and, again, "the flesh profiteth nothing." This is literally true. There is no reason to suppose that the flesh and blood of Jesus of Nazareth differed in any respect from that of other mortals, and that if it were possible to partake of them it would be of any benefit to body, soul, or spirit of the partaker.

2. It seems to me, too, that we may also dismiss without much more discussion the notion that Christ means simply that we are to accept his teachings, that we are, to use the modern form of his own figure, to imbibe those teachings. It is true that the Hebrew rabbis commonly used in Christ's time a metaphor similar to that which Christ used here. "To eat of my bread" was with them a popular phrase equivalent to "partake of my doctrine." But it would seem that Christ labored to show that he meant something more than this. He does not tell his disciples that they must eat of his bread, but that they must eat of *him*, and, that there may be no misunderstanding, that they may see clearly that he means something more than imbibing his teachings or eating of his bread, he adds that they must eat his flesh and drink his blood. And yet, that they may understand that this is a metaphor not to be taken literally, he closes his discourse with the declaration that it is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.

Let us, then, look for a moment at the metaphor itself; at its philosophical suggestiveness. When we eat bread or drink wine, what happens? The bread that we eat, the wine that we drink, is digested and converted into animal tissue; it becomes flesh, nerve, bone, blood. It ceases to be something apart from us, and becomes a part of our own organization. In a somewhat analogous manner is the process of intellectual nutrition carried on. The child commits to memory a page out of a book, but it remains something extraneous to the child; it is something apart from him; it is something which he has committed to memory and can recite; but it does not change his opinions, qualify his judgment, influence his will, or affect his action. In the higher reading and culture all this does take place.

The student no longer merely commits the author to memory; he imbibes his author; he catches the spirit of Shakespeare, or Browning, or Wordsworth; he gets his favorite author's view of life. Or, is it a philosopher he is studying, he becomes himself Hegelian or Kantian. He has done something more now than merely learn a book; he has modified his intellectual character by digesting and assimilating—we are compelled to use the metaphor—the author on whom he has fed.

Now, a similar process is possible spiritually. The most transcendent influence in the world is that of personality. One may be brought under the influence of another and overmastering personality, so that his own is modified, transformed, or possibly subjugated. He thinks of life differently; he forms new resolutions; he pursues new courses of conduct. To feed on Christ is not merely to learn what he has had to say; it is not merely to obey him as a soldier obeys a general. It is to so absorb him, so catch his spirit, so be molded and influenced by his life, as to be "a new man in Christ Jesus." If partaking of the sacrament helps this, then partaking of the sacrament is one method of feeding on Christ. If reading the Gospel helps this, then reading the Gospel is another method of feeding on Christ. But neither partaking of the sacrament nor reading the Gospel constitutes a feeding on Christ, unless the result is a new and more Christlike spirit in the spirit of the man, a new and more Christlike life lived by him.

It is not easy to state what relation Christ's Passion and death has to thus feeding on him. But it is not necessary here to consider this question. We are endeavoring to see how Christ's auditors would have understood this sermon, and they knew nothing of his coming Passion and death. But when they learned that the kingdom of God was a life of loyalty to God; that to inherit that kingdom was to enter upon such a life as Christ was then living; that the change must be in them, not in their government or their wealth or their social circumstances; that he was leading them, not to a political domination, but to a righteous self-control, not to new conditions of life, but to a life itself new; and that he himself, in his loneliness and poverty, illustrated the life to which he invited them, they drew back and followed him no more.

CHAPTER XX.—A PERIOD OF SECLUSION

Mark vi., 24–28; viii., 1–26; Matt. xvi., 13–28

It has become evident that the Jewish nation is not ready for the revelation of the kingdom of God. Rejected by his own countrymen at Capernaum, foreseeing more plainly than ever the immediate issue of his mission in his own impending death, Jesus Christ turns away from the multitude, and, followed by his few faithful friends, seeks retirement, that in a period of seclusion he may give them instruction in the principles of his kingdom—instruction by which they may be guided after his death. The period with which we have to do in the next two chapters of this series is this period of seclusion. "If he goes into any of the cities, he still endeavors to remain unknown; when a deaf and dumb man is brought to him, he takes him aside from the multitude before he opens his ears and loosens his tongue; when, in the city of Bethsaida, a blind man is brought to him, it is not till he has led him outside the city walls that he bids him see; and alike upon the subjects of his healing and upon his disciples he enjoins secrecy, though for the most part seemingly in vain. So marked is this change in his ministry, so evident is his effort during these six months of exile to secure retirement and to live unnoticed, that his brethren taunt him with his concealment, and dare him to show himself openly to the world if he be indeed the Messiah that he claims to be."[1] To some significant incidents in this period of seclusion our attention is especially drawn in the Scripture lessons suggested for this and the succeeding week.

From Galilee Jesus first retreats to the coast of Tyre and Sidon. His object was not missionary labor, but rest and an opportunity for quiet conference with the Twelve. His aim was analogous to that of the ministry in the mod-

[1] Mark ix., 30; vii., 33; viii., 22–36; vii., 36; viii., 26; John vii., 2–5. See Chapter XXIII. in my "Jesus of Nazareth."

ern "retreat." But his fame had preceded him, and he could not secure the seclusion he desired.[1] A Syro-Phœnician woman forced her way into the Master's presence and implored his aid for her suffering daughter. We misread the story of Christ's life by denying to him those flashes of humor, that incisive but delicate irony, that humanistic spirit which belongs to all the greatest moral teachers. To suppose that Jesus in the spirit of his own disciples looked upon this woman—upon any child of God—as a dog and repulsed her contemptuously, his contempt vanquished only by her importunity, is to do singular dishonor to his name. Christ neither intended to repel this mother, nor, in fact, did so. He interpreted his language by the tones of his voice and the expression of his face. It is not difficult for imagination to conceive the picture: she throwing herself at his feet imploring his help; the disciples with their narrow Jewish bigotry, impossible to penetrate by any sympathy for a heathen woman, no matter what her distress; and his ironical rebuke of their narrow-mindedness by his seeming participation in it, a seeming beneath which her quick motherly intuition easily saw the real divine sympathy. "But, my woman," he says, "it is not proper to take the bread from these children" (he designates them with a glance or with a gesture as he speaks), "and cast it to the pet dogs, even the pet dogs of the household." She catches his spirit and perceives her understanding of him by her response. "That is true, Lord," she says, "for the pet dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the table of their masters. There is enough for both, and they feed from that which the children cast away or passed by in indifference."[2] The lesson taught to his disciples, the revelation of the catholicity of his spirit and of the Gospel made to them by a satire which even their dull hearts could hardly fail to apprehend, he grants the mother's request, and then, all hope of retirement in Phœnicia being taken

[1] Mark vii., 24.

[2] The grounds for the interpretation which I here give to the incident of the Syro-Phœnician woman the student will find explained in full in my Commentary on Matthew, Chapter XV. I believe it to be borne out, not only by the general character of Christ, but by a careful study of the original Greek. I pass by the feeding of the four thousand because its significance is not different from that of the feeding of the five thousand heretofore described. There is some question whether there are not two accounts of the same incident, though, for the reasons stated in my Commentary on Mark, I agree with Alford in thinking that there were two feedings.

away, goes back to Galilee, thence to depart again to seek seclusion anew in the vicinity of Cæsarea Philippi.

North of Galilee, at the head waters of the Jordan, about four miles east of Dan, which was the northernmost town of Palestine, was this city named in honor of Augustus Cæsar and of Herod Philip, the tetrarch, who made it the site of his villas and palaces. Here stood side by side the bust of Cæsar Augustus and the shrine of Pan; here side by side were maintained the two most common forms of idolatry, the worship of political power and the worship of the forces of nature; here, free from the intrusion of public clamor and popular adulation, equally distasteful to him, the Master found the opportunity for quiet conference with the Twelve. And from this seclusion he set his face steadfastly toward Jerusalem, toward Gethsemane and the crucifixion, to complete his earthly mission by his passion and his death.[1] Here he made his first distinct declaration of his Messiahship to his disciples, characteristically calling forth from them their belief in him as the Messiah, and then confirming it. "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" he asks; and they said: "Some say that thou art John the Baptizer, some Elijah, and some Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." He said unto them: "Whom say ye that I am?" One can imagine the moment of hesitation in which they look one to the other questioningly, and then the boldest of them utters the faith which has grown into their hearts so gradually that they are scarcely conscious of it: "Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

Christ's confirmation of this article of their faith appears to me to have been strangely misapprehended, nor have I space here to enter into the grounds for the different interpretation which indeed I can only briefly suggest.[2] Not on Simon as an individual does Christ build his Church, nor on Simon and his successors, for of successors he gives no hint either here or elsewhere; nor on the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus Christ, for this common Protestant interpretation robs the play upon words in Christ's

[1] For graphic description of Cæsarea Philippi, now known as Paneas or Banias, see George Adam Smith's "Holy Land," pages 473-479.

[2] For a fuller statement of this interpretation, and the grounds for it, see my "Signs of Promise," Sermons 9 and 10, and my Commentary on Matthew, xvi., 13-19.

response of all their significance. What Christ says is this: "By this living faith in me as the living Messiah, you, Simon, impulsive, changeable like a wave of the sea, are converted into Peter, a rock. And upon this rock, this character thus divinely transformed by a renewing of the Holy Spirit through faith in me as the Messiah, I will build my Church. That Church is founded, not on a man, nor on a hierarchical succession, nor on an intellectual dogma, but on a transformation of character through an indwelling Christ.[1] To every soul thus transformed by the renewing of his spirit Christ gives the key of the kingdom of heaven—not a key to let men into a future heaven, still less a key to Peter as a porter, giving him power to receive or to exclude from the celestial city, but the key as a symbol of authority in the Christian life, the key of God upon the earth. Not authority to loose and bind, or to designate who shall be loosed or bound, in heaven, but authority to loose (that is, permit) and bind (that is, prohibit) upon the earth—authority to regulate one's own conduct, not as coerced by laws of an external authority, but as guided and inspired by the spirit of liberty within. This power of the keys, which has been made an excuse for spiritual despotism, is really a Magna Charta of liberty in the kingdom of God for all the disciples of Christ. "I understand, then, the promise of the keys to be made to Peter as the possessor of a living faith in Jesus as the divine Messiah, and through him to all who by a like faith are endued with a like strength of character, not natural, but God-given, and I would paraphrase it thus: To my disciples I will give authority in their spiritual life so that they shall no longer be bound by rules and regulations like those of the Pharisees or of the Mosaic code; but whatsoever, under the inspiration of a living faith in me, they shall prohibit themselves, God will prohibit, and whatsoever, under that inspiration, they shall permit themselves, God will permit; for they shall have the mind of the Spirit."

[1] See, in confirmation of this view, Peter's own interpretation in 1 Pet. ii., 4-6.

CHAPTER XXI.—THE TRANSFIGURATION

Luke ix., 28–36; Matt. xvii., 14–27

It is not until Christ has been rejected by the common people, and not until his immediate disciples have recognized him as the Messiah, not because of any manifest glory or popular acceptance, but despite popular rejection, and because of his own personal character and beneficent work, that Christ makes that revelation of this secret mystery of his life afforded by the Transfiguration. It then comes in as the outward and visible confirmation of a faith which is based upon a spiritual foundation of faith and love.

The notion that the story of the Transfiguration is the story of a dream may be dismissed without much argument at the outset. If it was dreamed by one of these witnesses, and afterwards narrated by him, it is hardly credible that the narrative would have been received against the testimony of the other two; and a concurrent dream is as much out of the order of nature as a supernatural visitation. Like some other hypotheses that assume the honorable title of "rational," this one is peculiarly contrary to reason.

If, however, we accept what is certainly a common view of the spirit world, I know not how this episode can be interpreted at all. It can only be regarded as an event wholly miraculous; equally out of the order of nature and of the supernatural. That common view of the spirit world is nebulous at best, but it may be briefly stated thus: Death is a sleep; at death the soul goes into a semi-conscious condition and lives in some far off Lotus-land of dreams; the body waits in the grave the summons of the last trump; in a thousand years or a thousand centuries, whenever time shall have finished its cycle and the end shall have come, the body will rise from its resting-place and become that soul's future habitation; the scattered portions of human bodies taken up by grass and grain and

incorporated in infinite forms of vegetable and animal life will be brought together by the command of God—for nothing is too difficult for the Almighty—and then the long-broken current of life will begin again.

These ashes, too, this little dust,
A Father's care shall keep,
Till the last angel rise and break
The long and dreary sleep.

On this notion of death and resurrection we must imagine that Moses and Elijah were especially called from long sleep in death for this special interview; what became of them after their premature resurrection, whether they waited in loneliness for their companions or whether they went back to their long sleep, I shall leave those to guess who adopt a hypothesis so crowded with difficulties—rational, interpretative, and moral—as this heart-breaking and wholly unscriptural hypothesis seems to me to be.

As I read the New Testament, there is to the believer no break in the continuity of life; no "long and dreary sleep;" no waiting for a future and far-off resurrection; no "happy land, far, far, away;" no further use for this lame, blind, deaf, ailing, sick body after it is laid away in the grave; no conceivable use in preserving it by embalming, or stone sarcophagus, or iron casket, or closed tomb. It is the soldier's tent; his campaign is over; he is at home; and the sooner it is made over into some new and valuable thing the better. It is the immigrant's wagon; he has reached his destination; the wagon has served its purpose, but its journeys have come to an end; knock it to pieces and turn its material to good account. Of the resurrection of this body, corrupt, decaying, evanescent, the Bible gives no hint; on the contrary, it repudiates it in strongest terms. When the death-angel appears to the disciple, saying, "Follow me," the chains fall off from the long-fettered soul; he carries not a link of them away to encumber his future freedom. Whether Swedenborg's fancy of a spiritual body is true I know not. Having no faith in him as a prophet, his revelations seem to me but the imaginings of a fine and poetic soul. But, true or false, the resurrection is accomplished when life is ended, and the soul and the breath leave the body forever at the same moment. Thank God it is so! Thank God my

mind is not to be forever fettered by the conditions imposed upon it by an easily wearied brain, nor my heart checked in its aspirations by a body gross and sensuous and earthy.

As little authority is there for the notion of the "happy land, far, far away." The Bible never so represents it. The heavenly Jerusalem is a holy city let down to the earth. Heaven is at hand. If it has geographical limits of any sort, earth is not beyond them. What powers of soul-flight to the other and far-off worlds the soul may possess, who can tell? What explorations it may make into secrets of the universe into which telescope and spectroscope pry in vain, who may guess? The stars may be other continents whither the emancipated wander, as here we travel through foreign countries carrying our bodies like heavy and cumbersome baggage. But whatever other lands may be opened to the winged spirits, the earth is not closed to them. Whatever other companionship may be theirs, the companionship of earth is not denied them. They are all ministering spirits; we may live and walk in the midst of them. If our ears were adjusted to such delicate music, we might hear their songs; if our eyes were not so gross and sensuous, we might perceive their now invisible forms. When the prophet touched the eyes of the young man, and he looked up, he saw the horizon full of the horses and chariots of the Lord encamped around Elisha; they were not then summoned from a far-off land for his protection. When Elisha recalled the wandering spirit of the boy to the dead body, it had not far to travel to return to its earthly tent. When Christ called with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" the spirit was within hearing and could obey. When Christ hung on the cross, with the dying thief beside him, he was able to say, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." No long interval of weary centuries was to be first wasted in useless sleep. When Paul, imprisoned at Rome, looked forward with longing to the hour of his liberation, it was not that he might find Job's couch, "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest," but that he might "depart and be with Christ, which is far better." That there are passages in the Bible which seem to point to a great and universal resurrection at some far-off period, I frankly con-

cede ; but that this is its general teaching I vigorously and earnestly deny. All its teaching is pictorial. It all speaks of that which to us is incomprehensible. Any clear, definite, and accurate conception of the spirit world is impossible ; but the picture of a long rest, a soul living unclad or asleep, or waiting in some reception-room of heaven for its habiliments, presents far more difficulties to the reverent student of Scripture than the view which holds that the Judgment Day has already dawned ; that the dead are passing in a continuous procession from earth to God's judgment bar ; that death and the resurrection are simultaneous ; that the separation between earth and heaven is a narrow partition, and death is but the swinging of the door ; and that the dead are living, more truly living than we, and living often close at hand : so close that we are surrounded by them as by a cloud of witnesses ; so close that the evil spirits breathe into our souls pestiferous imaginations and blasphemous thoughts ; so close that we have need to arm ourselves not merely against flesh and blood, but also against the prince of the power of the air, against wicked spirits in high places ; so close, too, that mothers still keep watch and ward over their children, and the friend still serves, by subtle influences, as guide and inspiration of his friend. Oh, mother, laying down at last your weary burden, and only too glad to lay it down but that you cannot bear to be separated from the children whose strength is so small and whose need is so great, who ever told you that you are to be separated from them ? They shall be separated from you ; but you shall not be separated from them.

Accepting this conception of the spirit world—as a world all about us, as a world in which we live, as a world from which we are separated only by our own dullness of sense and heaviness of vision—the story of the Transfiguration ceases to be a strange episode, a breaking in upon nature and the supernatural ; rather it will seem strange that many a follower of Christ has not known a like experience of communion with the sainted and risen dead.

Christ was accustomed to retire from the haunts of men, even from the companionship of his own disciples, and spend all night in prayer among the hills of Galilee. Of these secret and sacred communings this story of the

Transfiguration gives us our only glimpse. These nights of prayer were nights of communion; nights in which the obscurity of sense was cleared away, and the half-enfranchised soul saw and communed with the souls that were wholly freed from the dimness and darkness of the flesh, and, most of all, with the Father whom no eye of flesh ever has seen or ever can see. And on the one occasion when his three friends were permitted to share his place of prayer with him, they caught also the inspiration of his spirit, and beheld two of the cloud of witnesses that were watching over them—that are ever watching over us.

If, however, this incident thus interpreted affords us a new sense of the reality and the presence of the spirit world, it also guards us against going out of the activities of an earthly existence to indulge in reveries and dreams concerning the invisible. Their presence may well serve as an inspiration; their ministry may be real and helpful; but we may not turn aside from present duty for converse with them. If ever any of us are inclined to listen to the voices of the voiceless dead, the one voice which speaks to us out of the cloud—and the *only* voice—is, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." If we are ever inclined to turn our longing eyes toward this impalpable world, and seek for some materialized form of the invisible dead, we may well remember that the glimpse of the lawgiver and the prophet was but a glimpse, and that when the disciples' eyes were open they saw no one save Jesus only. If we are inclined to abide on the Mount of Vision, and substitute spiritual ecstasy for practical duty, we shall do well to recall the throng that waited at the foot of the Mount for Jesus's return, bringing power of healing for the demoniac boy, and to remember that the poor we have always with us, and that the hours of inspiration are meant to equip us with a larger sympathy, a broader human love, and a profounder curative and healing faith as a preparation for the work of casting the devil out of those who abide in the valley.

CHAPTER XXII.—JESUS IN JERUSALEM

John vii., 1–52; John viii., 1–59

In studying the life of Christ, and in comparing the discourses in John's Gospel with those in the Synoptic Gospels, the reader must remember that many of the discourses reported in John were delivered in Jerusalem, while those in Matthew and Mark were for the most part delivered in Galilee, to which Luke adds some which were delivered in Perea. Comparing Palestine with Europe in the seventeenth century, Galilee may be said to be the Germany, Judea the Italy, of the Holy Land. In Galilee Christ was surrounded with a simple-hearted folk who were inclined to welcome much of his message. In Jerusalem he was surrounded by the adherents of a hierarchy who were bent on his destruction. In Galilee his auditors believed in laws of righteousness, and welcomed a rabbi who taught them that to obey is better than sacrifice. In Jerusalem his auditors were people whose commercial and social as well as religious life was bound up with the Temple, and to whom ceremonial law seemed far more important than the Ten Commandments.

His hostile critics deny his right to teach because he is not a graduate; they attempt to arrest him for teaching without authority, but his moral power overawes the officers and he is not taken; they scoff at his teaching because he is a Galilean; they endeavor to bring him into collision with the law of Moses by bringing in a woman convicted of adultery to condemn or to acquit; they interrupt him in his teaching with continual questionings, and when they find themselves unable to outwit him, they follow questioning with abuse, and abuse with proffered violence. All this is to be borne in mind in interpreting the discourses recorded in the seventh and eighth chapters of John, of which here I can give but the briefest epitome.

The law of Moses is primarily a law of righteousness.

Men who are murderers at heart are not obeying that law because they are rigid ceremonialists. They think they will know the Messiah when he comes, but they neither know him, nor his origin, nor his destiny. He comes to bring to humanity the spirit of the divine life, the spirit of obedience, which is religion, and that spirit they will not receive. He who does receive it walks in the light because the light is in himself. He who has this light in himself will recognize in Jesus the Messiah, and will receive the witness which the Father has given of his Messiahship. He who has this spirit will be emancipated from bondage —bondage to sin, bondage to the letter of the law. It is to bring this emancipation about by bringing this illumination that the Son has come to the world. The true children of Abraham are those who possess Abraham's spirit. They who do the deeds of malice and hate are not children of Abraham, but children of the devil. They who possess this spirit of light and life are immortal; they cannot die. They see with vision what Abraham saw by faith—God revealing himself to humanity, for Jesus the Messiah is the consummation of that long historic revelation which began with the voice that called Abraham out of heathenism.

So these discourses, which I have treated here as one, the object of which is to teach the liberty and life of the spirit to a people who are in bondage to the letter, reach their consummation in the enigmatical but sublime declaration, a declaration which binds the Old and the New Testament together in one book of revelation, "Before Abraham was, I am."

The Life of Christ

CHAPTER XXIII.—CHRIST'S MINISTRY IN JERUSALEM, CONTINUED

John ix., 1–41; x., 1–42

(For comments on Lesson 25, see next chapter)

The chronology of this portion of Christ's life is involved in obscurity. I believe, however, that the ministry reported in John vii., 10—x., 39, was one continuous ministry of about three months' duration in Jerusalem, immediately after which Christ departed to the region beyond Jordan (John x., 40–42), the record of his ministry there being given alone by Luke. In this chapter, therefore, I do not follow the order of The Bible Study Union Lessons. (See next chapter.)

Christ's Judean ministry was one of continuous storm. Twice he was mobbed, once an attempt was made to arrest him, more than once secret plans for his assassination were formed. It is doubtful whether any of the evangelists except John were with Jesus during this time; at all events, it is he alone who gives us an account of it. In our last chapter we saw the mob gathering with stones in their hands to stone Jesus. He hid himself, it is said, and escaped. In this chapter we come to another illustration of the same spirit of enmity, though here it takes the form of the judicial trial.

Passing along the street one day, he sees a man blind from his birth; anoints his eyes with clay and spittle, which in ancient times were believed to possess curative properties, and bids him go, wash in the pool of Siloam. He goes, and finds his sight restored. The healing creates great public interest. It is brought to the attention of the Sanhedrim; they seize upon the fact that the healing was done upon the Sabbath day, and a judicial investigation follows. The parents appear, and, when summoned before the court, evade its questioning, for it has already been

determined that whoever acknowledges Christ as the Messiah shall be excommunicated; and, while it is doubtful whether this sentence practically involved all the penalties [1] implied in the Talmud, and actually involved in excommunication by the Church of Rome at a later day, it is certain that the excommunicated was practically cut off from social intercourse and largely from all those commercial enterprises which involved association with others.

The man himself, summoned and put upon oath, at first himself avoids any issue with the court. Whether the man who cured him is an impostor or not, he will not undertake to say. But he repeats unhesitatingly the story of his cure; then, aroused to anger, taunts the court, stands bravely up for his convictions, affirms his faith that the man who cured him is no impostor, but truly a man of God; and suffers the penalty in the dreaded ban of excommunication pronounced against him. One cannot but wish to know what later became of him. So far as the account indicates, he was left by Christ to bear the penalty of his fidelity to his convictions—one of the earliest, if not the very earliest, of the Christian martyrs who suffered persecution for Christ's sake. If we believe, as I do, that we have in this chapter the record of an eye-witness, it is peculiarly valuable because it gives an account of the only one of Christ's miracles which was subjected to a judicial or *quasi* judicial investigation; and, as the result of that investigation, the reality of the cure could not be denied, and the only way in which a hostile court could break its moral effect was by driving into social exile the witness whose testimony could not be contradicted.

The healing of the blind man and the judicial investigation of the miracle were followed by a double parable in which a familiar figure drawn from the Old Testament prophets was made first to indicate the attitude of Christ's disciples, then to indicate his own nature and office. "Whoever," says Christ, "enters into my fold, becomes a shepherd of the sheep." Each shepherd has his own sheep, each disciple his own pupils, who will hear only his voice, respond only to his influence. But he that would be a prophet of God must first himself come to God by Christ,

[1] For description of the effect of the anathema, as stated in the Talmud, see Edersheim's "Life of Jesus," Vol. II., p. 183.

first enter into the fold through the one only door. Whosoever puts himself before Christ, whosoever claims precedence before him, or sets him one side as the Pharisees did, are thieves and robbers. They rob men of the life which Jesus Christ has come to bestow.[1]

Then Christ makes a new application of the same figure. He is himself the supreme Shepherd, the Good Shepherd who gave his life for the sheep. He lays that life down at will; he will at will take that life up again. Bringing these two parables together, as the Master does, they teach at once the supreme authority of Christ, and what has been well called the "liberty of prophesying" of all Christ's disciples.

This parabolic teaching is speedily followed by another discourse concerning Himself, the significance of which neither was nor well could be misunderstood. A hostile crowd surround him and demand that he say plainly whether he is the Messiah or not. He does not give a categorical answer to that question; but he does answer plainly what is his mission and what his power. He gives to his followers eternal life, and no man can rob them of it; because the Father is greater than all, and he and his Father are one—one, clearly (otherwise there is no significance in the argument), in power and authority, not merely in will or desire. So, clearly, the mob understand him, for they take up stones to stone him for blasphemy. With that marvelous presence of his he overawes and halts them; cites to them their own Scriptures, that the prophets of God are sons of God, and asks them a question which they cannot answer, why they charge him with blasphemy because he has claimed to be the Son of God. If—this is the gist of the argument—he to whom the Spirit of God comes is made a partaker of the divine nature and a child of God, then he who is not of this world, but is sent into it by the Father to reveal the Father to the world, cannot be guilty of blasphemy in calling himself a son of God.

Again the mob seek to lay hold of him; again he escapes from their hands, and turns his back upon Jerusalem as he has already turned his back upon Galilee. He has still a ministry to complete in the region beyond Jordan, and then the time will be ripe for his passion and death.

[1] For the reason of this interpretation of the parable I must refer the reader to my Commentary on John.

CHAPTER XXIV.—VARIOUS INCIDENTS AND TEACHINGS

Luke ix., 51–62; x., 1–24

The ministry of Christ may be roughly divided into four sections: the first, his ministry in Galilee, recorded by Matthew and Mark most fully, though also in part by Luke and John; the second, his ministry in Judea, occupying about three months and recorded only by John; the third, his ministry in Perea, or the region beyond the Jordan, referred to in John x., 40–42—another period of a little over three months, from some time in December to the first of April, the teachings and incidents in which are recorded almost exclusively by Luke; and, finally, the passion and death in Jerusalem, recorded by all four of the Evangelists, Matthew giving the fullest account of the public teachings, and John the only account of the private teachings to the Twelve.[1]

In connection with his report of the Perean ministry, Luke adds some incidents which evidently belong elsewhere, but which in The Bible Study Union Lessons are put where Luke has put them.

It is as Jesus is going up to his Passion in Jerusalem (Luke ix., 51) that a Samaritan village refused him that hospitality to refuse which in the Orient is a distinct insult. In the spirit of the Hebrew Psalmist, who counts the enemies of God his enemies, and hates them with a perfect hatred, John would call down fire from heaven to destroy the inhospitable Samaritans. But the spirit of Christ is not that of the Hebrew Psalmist. He would have his disciples love with a perfect love, not only those who hate them, but those even who treat despitefully their Master.

It is possibly on this journey, but more probably during

[1] Of course Christ was in Judea on other occasions, notably at the very outset of his ministry, and before it had really commenced as that of a public prophet and teacher. John ii., 13—iv., 42. See Chapters VII. and VIII.

his ministry in Galilee, that three would-be disciples offer themselves to him. The first, self-confident and impetuous, declares himself quite ready to follow wherever Christ would lead, but apparently halts and draws back when he learns the poverty of the Master and the self-sacrifice involved in following him. One cannot be a follower of Christ if he refuses the cross. A second, promising but procrastinating, will follow Christ after he has buried his father. But Christ has no faith in the promise of a man who postpones discipleship to a future day—no matter what may be the apparent reason for the postponement. A third, irresolute and hesitating, finds himself drawn in two directions, towards the Master and back towards his home. But he who halts between two purposes—he who, having put his hand to the plow, even looks back, is not ready for discipleship. There is no passage in the New Testament more significant than this passage in which Christ is portrayed as rejecting applicants for admission to his army.

Possibly in Jerusalem, more probably in the region about or beyond the Jordan, he utters his parable of the Good Samaritan. This parable has been so effective as to create in our minds entirely new associations with this word Samaritan. To understand its original significance we must remember that the Samaritan was both an apostate and a heretic. He belonged to a mongrel race; he had proved himself traitorous to Israel in more than one time of war; he had separated himself from Israel and the temple worship—was both heretic and schismatic. All the prejudice felt in our time by the Anglo-Saxon against the negro or the Indian, by the Northern loyalist against the Southern secessionist, and by the Protestant against the Jew or the Roman Catholic, was felt by the Israelite against the Samaritan. Christ's direct and immediate teaching is that practical goodness is better than sound doctrine, national fellowship, or purity of blood. He teaches this, it is to be observed, not by an argument, but by an appeal to the instinctive sentiment of mankind, and thus indirectly he teaches that those instincts and sentiments may be trusted, and that no philosophy can be sound which does not take account of and harmonize with them.

Just outside of Jerusalem is the village of Bethlehem,

where reside dear friends of Jesus—Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus. We shall come again upon them in Christ's life. Luke records one simple and significant incident connected with this home. Christ, wearied, we may assume, with the perpetual battling in Jerusalem—for this incident properly belongs in his Judean ministry—retreats from the threatening and hostile city to the seclusion of this home for rest. Both the sisters love him, and each seeks to serve him after her peculiar fashion: one by bustling about with great assiduity to get a supper worthy of the Rabbi; the other by sitting quietly at his feet, bringing her questions and drinking in his instructions. The teacher, wearied with dull disciples and a hostile mob, wearied with endeavoring to compel the one to listen and to enable the other to understand, does not care for the elaborate supper—a very simple repast would serve him quite as well—but finds a refreshment which every true teacher can understand in the presence of one appreciative, sympathetic, and responsive listener.

The commission of the seventy almost unquestionably belongs to the Perean ministry. Their mission is much like that of the Twelve appointed in Galilee; but they were seventy instead of twelve, for the territory was larger and the time shorter. They were not forbidden from entering into any Gentile city, for in Perea Gentile and Jew were associated together in the same cities; their ministry was not confined to the unwalled towns, and no instruction respecting persecution was given to them, as serious persecution was not to be expected until after their mission had come to an end. Otherwise the spirit, and to some extent the letter, of their instructions is the same as that of the commission to the Twelve.

CHAPTER XXV.—THE PEREAN MINISTRY

Luke, chapters xi. and xii.

Palestine in the time of Christ was divided geographically into four sections: Galilee, on the north, which we may call the New England of Palestine; Samaria, in the center, occupied by a mongrel population, to which Christ did not to any extent minister; Judea, on the south, under the control of the hierarchy, centered at Jerusalem; and Perea, so called from the Greek word *pera* (beyond), that is, the region beyond the Jordan. This is a wild and romantic region even now, but little visited by travelers to the Holy Land, who practically regard the Jordan as its eastern boundary.

But in Christ's time this was a populous and prosperous district, its hills famous for pasturage and the cattle for their size and fatness. Along the river Jordan the ruins of 127 villages have been counted, and the flourishing cities in its northern portion gave to that section the name of Decapolis (Ten Cities). The population of Perea was not homogeneous. Israelites and Gentiles were here intermixed, living side by side in the same towns and villages. In this semi-pagan community the sheep of Israel were truly wandering sheep—in the estimation of the haughty Judean, lost sheep. To this era of Christ's ministry belong most of the teachings contained in Luke, chapters x.–xvi. It is here, probably, that in the parable of the Good Samaritan he rebukes pride of caste and race, and in the parable of the Rich Fool and of Lazarus the pride of wealth; here that he teaches, in the three matchless parables of the fifteenth chapter, that the grace of God goes out after the wandering and the lost; here, attendant upon the feast of the wealthy Pharisee, he rebukes social display and urges a true Christian hospitality; and here, as in Galilee and in Jerusalem, but more than in Galilee and

less than in Jerusalem, he has occasion to denounce the pride and hypocrisy of Pharisaism.

Our next three chapters will be taken up with this Perean ministry, to which also belongs the commission of the seventy, referred to in the last chapter.

Prayer has been taught by the Pharisees and by John the Baptist as a ritual. In the teaching of the former, its value depended upon the accuracy with which the prescribed rite was followed. The simple-minded disciples, imagining their Master's vigil to be like those of the Pharisees, and like those of the Christian monks at a later epoch—repetitions of prescribed formularies—asked him to teach them what those formularies are. He replies, in substance, that to pray acceptably is to carry to the Father the desires which are actually in our heart, and he groups together in one incomparable prayer the common desires and petitions of humanity. We are not to regard this, however, as the Lord's ideal of devotion. That is furnished us by the intercessory prayer which John has reported as uttered by the Master at the close of his last conference with his disciples. (John, chap. xvii.)

Prayer is to be measured, not by the forms of the words used, but by the reality and intensity of the desire. This is the significance of importunity, which is worse than meaningless when it is not the natural expression of genuine eagerness. The ground and argument for prayer are found in our own intercourse with one another. Any conception of God and his government which regards him as so bound and hampered by his own laws, or even by his own foreknowledge, that he cannot feel and respond to the heartfelt desires of his children, is false. Man is made in God's image, and if we are able to commune one with another, and affect one another by our spiritual life, much more may we commune with the Everlasting Father, and have influence with him.

He meets in Perea the same hostile elements which he has met in Galilee, though here they are more intense and more hostile. He does not yield to them; on the contrary, he declares that Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba will rise up in judgment against the nation of Israel and condemn them because their privilege has been greater than that of the age to which Jonah and that of the age to

which Solomon spoke. He denounces the Pharisaism which is scrupulous respecting externalities and indifferent regarding the spirit; which pretends to revere the prophets of the past, yet continues to exemplify the spirit of those who maltreated the prophets. He discerns the secret which they hide behind pietistic garments, and shames them by disclosing their covetousness. He points out to the people the folly of covetousness: the man who thinks only how he can accumulate, and not how he can use, he condemns. Men admire what they call this man's success, which they measure by the greatness of his granaries, but God calls him fool. And He repeats in slightly different forms and slightly different connections the same teachings which he has given to the people in Galilee—the value and the blessedness of the filial trust in a heavenly Father's care—a trust which rests upon and cannot exist without simple, single-hearted, earnest consecration.

CHAPTER XXVI.—THE PEREAN MINISTRY, CONTINUED

Luke, chapters xiii. and xiv.

In grouping together the teachings and incidents in the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of Luke, the editor of The Bible Study Union Lessons follows the evangelist. It is not by any means certain, however, that these fragments of history belong chronologically in the order indicated by Luke; nor even that they all belong in the Perean ministry, though that is probable. Without attaching importance to the order, I content myself with pointing out certain general lessons inculcated in these passages. For a certain moral co-relation may be found in them, and in this fact is an indication that they belong to the same epoch in Christ's history.

In Perea, then, as in Galilee and in Judea, Christ meets the enemy of spiritual religion, Pharisaism or legalism. It shows itself in different forms, for it has not only many masks but many aspects; but it is at heart ever and always the same.

It sometimes appears as a self-righteous spirit, and interprets with unshrinking audacity the events of current history as "special providences," but always so as to flatter its own pride. Wicked Galileans! cries the Perean Pharisee, or they would not have been slain by Herod's sword. Wicked Judeans! or they would not have been killed by the falling of Siloam's tower. And the silent conclusion is, Pious Pereans! who have not been adjudged worthy of such a fate. We may be sure that the Galilean Pharisee had a different interpretation for the first disaster, and the Judean Pharisee for the second. But Christ puts all under the same condemnation—the condemnation of fruitless lives. The life that is not fruitful in love awaits destruction. Why should it cumber the ground?

In Perea, as in Galilee and Judea, the Sabbath question, as it is sometimes called, the ceremonial question as I

should prefer to call it, is presented. Christ does not wait for his adversaries to raise it; he raises it himself. He is teaching in the Synagogue on the Sabbath, and publicly, one might almost say ostentatiously, heals a paralytic. This calls down on him the rebuke of the ruler of the Synagogue, who argues, in true Pharisaic fashion, that the healing was quite unnecessary. Christ replies with the unanswerable argument that to loose a paralytic from her bonds is a diviner work than to loose an ox or an ass from his stall to water him. No day and no place is too sacred for works of humanity. "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

The Pharisee is continually trying to escape the questions of practical religion by substituting for them questions of abstract theology. The scholasticism of modern times and of the Middle Ages is only a survival of a rather milder form of the same spirit in the first century. The Pharisee does not ask, What shall I do to be saved? still less, What can I do to save others? but, Are there few that be saved? What are our most modern questions about the elect and the heathen but a new form of this question? And to the theoretical question Christ always gives a practical answer. Few? That is my business, not yours. For you, the business is to put your whole energy on your own life and duty; it calls for it all; and do it now, because when once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, you may seek to enter in, and find it too late. I should like to believe that the door of hope eternally stands open. But I confess myself unable to reconcile my wish with this teaching of the Master.

The Pharisee is always a coward; always trying to accomplish by indirect means what he has not the manliness to attempt openly and avowedly. It is exactly like the Pharisee, modern and ancient, to come persuasively to an unwelcome teacher and counsel him to depart—quietly. Herod is after him, and will kill him. Anything will do for a Herod that will serve to get rid of a too plain and outspoken teacher. "Go tell that fox!" Ah! he saw that they were at one with Herod, had perhaps gotten their message from him, and were as foxy as their master. Keen was the word, and it cut deep. Sometimes a word is needed which has such an edge to it.

The Pharisee is very susceptible to public opinion. He delights to honor the preacher whom the public is honoring. He leaves the prophet to fight his battle alone; when he wins, comes out to honor him; when he fails, comes out to curse him. Just now Christ is popular; so one of our Pharisees makes him a great supper. And, by the way, observe that Christ did not object to social festivity on the Sabbath day. But what a miserable pretense at honoring Christ this is!—which neglects his laws, disregards his instructions, repudiates his spirit, and asks him to a feast where guest clamors and pushes against guest for the most honored seat. Something suggestive of this in some modern churches, sometimes—is there not? For eighteen centuries Christ's ideal of a social party has been before the world. And still in Christendom a Christ-patterned party, though not unknown, is rare. For the most part we invite our own set—those who have invited us and to whom we owe something, or who can invite us in turn.

It is very characteristic of Pharisaism to be very devout—in prospect. Just now, with Christ homeless and a wanderer, there is no great blessing in attaching one's self too closely to his fortunes; but one may, with prudence, with hands clasped and eyes upraised, enjoy great anticipations of blessed communion with him in heaven. Religion is always admirable in the martyrdoms of the past and in the glories of the future—but just now! excuse me: I have my property to attend to, and I my business, and I my wife. But—there is no glory in the future for him who does not count the cost and pay the cost in the present: who does not count loyalty to the Master and his cause more than property or business or wife herself. The spirit of self-sacrifice is the savor of a Christian character. Without it he who calls himself a Christian is but a Pharisee—salt without savor, not fit even for the dunghill.

Strange is the contrast of this scorn for the Pharisee, with his self-righteous conceit, and his scholastic theologizings, and his foxy cunning, and his thinly disguised self-honor, and his pious benediction on goodness and facile self-excuse for not practicing it—strange the contrast with the next chapter's tenderness and compassion for the wandering and the lost, who may yet, perhaps, be reclaimed even in and from their despair.

CHAPTER XXVII.—FIVE PARABLES

Luke, chapters xv. and xvi.

The student of the five parables suggested for our consideration in this course in the Life of Christ will not expect, in this course of study, to make a careful and painstaking study of any one of these parables. All that he can do will be to collate and compare them and see what general teaching is inculcated, what system of grace and of admonition, by the group, taking them in their entirety.

So taking them, the first lesson which must impress itself upon us is the meaning which Christ attaches to the word "lost." The sheep in the first parable, the piece of silver in the second, the son in the third, are lost;—yet they are all found. A lost race is not a race beyond hope of recovery; a lost soul is not a soul beyond the possibility of redemption. Perhaps the best definition of lost from the Christ point of view is "not yet found." Christ is coming to seek and to save that which is lost; and that which is lost has not changed its essential nature. The wandering sheep is still a sheep—not a wolf; the piece of silver has still the impress of the king upon it, obscure but not destroyed. The boy is still the father's son, though an erring and a sinful son. The lost man has broken away from the brotherhood, as the sheep from the fold; has gone away from God, and is no more of value to Him, as the piece of silver which the owner cannot find. The lost son is lost to his brother and his father, but also lost to himself, and because no longer a true son, no longer a true man. And yet, if this sheep is brought back he will fit in with the fold; if this money is recovered it will be of value; if this son returns to his father he will be clothed and in his right mind. This is the threefold meaning of these two words "lost" and "found," ever to be borne in mind by us in our endeavor to understand the mystery of redemption. Sin is not natural, it is contra-natural. The

natural place of the soul is in fellowship with God, the natural life of the soul is the life of divine service.

Bearing this great and fundamental truth in mind, we may find in a comparison of the first three parables some suggestion of further truths. The first two may be called Calvinistic, for they represent God coming after the sinner; the third may be called Arminian, for it represents the sinner coming after God. Thus the three must be taken together in order to understand the change wrought in redemption. In fact, the soul never comes back to God except as God comes after the wandering soul. Again, looked at as a representation of human duty, the first two represent the duty of the Church to seek after the lost—the third, the duty of the Church to welcome the returning sinner with a full, free, and unreproachful pardon. To disbelieve in the possible restoration of the most outcast is to disbelieve the gospel of these three parables. To shut the door of hope upon the vagrant is to play the part of the elder brother—to be a Pharisee.

There are some other suggestions in the comparison of these three parables, less vital and important. In the first, the shepherd loses one sheep out of a hundred; in the second, the woman one piece of silver out of ten; in the third, the father one son of the two. "Thus," says Trench, "we find ourselves moving in ever narrower and so intenser circles of hope and fear and love, drawing in each successive parable nearer to the innermost center and heart of the truth." We may perhaps also see successive grades and depths of sin represented. In the wandering sheep, the sin of mere careless ignorance and indifference; in the lost coin, rolled away into some dark and noisome corner of the room, the sin of separation from God, isolation, and consequent vice; in the son, deliberately turning his back upon his father and demanding his portion to spend according to his own self-will, the sin of willful disobedience, lawlessness, open revolt.

Still continuing this comparison, we must see in all three parables the lesson, taught in different forms, of the possibility of recovery and therefore the reasonableness of hope, no matter what the error, the selfishness, or the willful revolt may have been. In all, too, the joyfulness of religion; the truth that the Gospel of Christ comes, not as

an added burden or an added law, but as a new hope and a new inspiration ; the truth that the joy is not for the virtuous and innocent alone, but for the repentant also ; the further truth that as by their sin they have added to the sorrow of heaven and earth, so by their penitence they can add to the joy and songfulness of God's universe.

If we now turn to the other parables, great as is the contrast between these of warning and those of grace, yet there is in them a common teaching. They are united in one system of doctrine by the one word "love." The three gospels of grace have for their theme the love of God ; the two gospels of warning, love in man. The first three set forth love as the ground of our hope ; the second two set forth love as the nature of duty. The first three appeal to the highest sentiments, the last two to prudential considerations. The first three are parables of the gospel ; the last two, parables of the law. The unjust steward, from motives of worldly shrewdness, gives his lord's estate with a free hand to the tenants under him, and so, by means of the unrighteous mammon, makes friends for himself among the tenants. If this is shrewd policy for the steward, who is dispensing his lord's estate without his lord's authority, how much more is it shrewd policy for the steward to whom the lord has intrusted that estate that he may distribute it among his tenants ! This is the lesson of the first parable ; and the second is like unto it. This often misunderstood parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus is meant to "take us, as it were, by storm, and once for all, out of the customary and earthly way of regarding life, and awaken us, once for all, to serious, to religious thought," by its dramatic representation of the general worthlessness of that which, from the worldly point of view, we are wont to value most highly. In dealing with the imagery of the parable, borrowed from and adapted to the then current and popular conceptions of the future life, we have too often forgotten the central and indisputable lesson afforded by the contrast between the envied rich man, faring sumptuously every day, whose only sin is his indifference to the wants of his fellow-men, and the last word of whose biography is that he "was buried," and the poor man, despised and outcast, who hardly had a burial awarded to him, save as it was necessary to rid the street of his corpse,

but who was borne by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The fuller and more detailed lessons implied, if not explicitly taught, in these parables must be left for a more minute study of them. Here we must content ourselves with summing all up in these two sentences:

The sole hope of man is in God's love.

The whole duty of man is to show Godlike love to his fellow-men.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS

John xi., 1–54

The significance of John's account of the resurrection of Lazarus as an evidence of Christ's divine mission and authority has always been felt and acknowledged alike by the believer and the unbeliever in historic Christianity. Thus, Spinoza declared that, "could he have persuaded himself of the truth of the raising of Lazarus, he would have broken in pieces his whole system, and would have embraced without repugnance the ordinary faith of Christians." In considering this story, therefore, the student must first consider, though necessarily briefly, the reasons for believing that the narrative is that of an eye-witness, and next the character and credibility of the eye-witness. There are really but three alternative hypotheses respecting this narrative: (1) That it grew up as a myth out of some slight pre-existing material, assuming its present form in the second or third century, and embodied with other material in a gospel edited from pre-existing material at that date. (2) That the death and resurrection of Lazarus were apparent, not real; the resurrection being a contrivance of the friends of Jesus to give *éclat* to his anticipated entry into Jerusalem, and that either he himself was deceived, or lent himself to the deception in a moment of fanatical enthusiasm. (3) That the events occurred as narrated by John; in which case we are left to draw our own conclusions from them, for—a fact to be considered more fully presently—John draws no conclusions himself.

The second of these hypotheses we do not think it necessary for us here to discuss. It is, indeed, suggested by Renan, and defended by him with what will strike the Anglo-Saxon reader as characteristic Parisian morality. That Jesus either lent himself to a deception or that he was himself deluded by a skillfully contrived scheme of

his friends—a scheme in which Mary and Martha must have had a principal part—I may assume will seem entirely incredible to readers of these papers. The first hypothesis, when advocated by Strauss, seemed not wholly unreasonable. Fifty years ago it was doubtful whether the Fourth Gospel was written in its present form before the third century. It is true that even then the weight of external evidence was in favor of an earlier date, but the question was hotly debated, and it was truly debatable. Recent discoveries, however, have settled that question beyond the possibility of a doubt. The lately discovered manuscript of the Gospels[1] carries the composition of the Fourth Gospel back to as early a date as 150. Tatian's "Diatessaron," the earliest Harmony of the Gospels, has been brought to light within the last few years. This harmony was published as early as 150, and was prepared by Tatian, who was born about the year 100. It is not credible that the Gospel came into existence in his own lifetime, and yet was accepted by him as John's Gospel. The discovery and publication of the "Diatessaron" thus makes it reasonably certain that the Fourth Gospel was written and published before the beginning of the second century—that is, within seventy years after the death of Christ, and during the lifetime, or certainly within a very few years after the death, of the Apostle John. If, then, we are to suppose that the Fourth Gospel was not written by John, or at his dictation, or by some one embodying his narratives and reports, we must suppose that already in John's lifetime there had risen a man of rare mystical genius who was able to palm off upon the Christian Church as John's Gospel a narrative with the composition of which John had nothing to do, and that this rare mystical genius has so absolutely perished from history as to leave no trace behind. This seems to me an incredible hypothesis. I think it is quite safe to say that now all external evidence is in favor of the belief that the Fourth Gospel was written by the Apostle John. The only argument against such authorship is the supposed incongruity between that Gospel and the Apocalypse, an incongruity which I believe can readily be accounted for if we suppose that the Apocalypse was written while John

[1] For an account of this see The Outlook for December 15, 1894.

still possessed the narrow and intense Hebrew character, while the Gospel was written after age, experience, and the teachings of life had rendered him more catholic, and had given him a truer conception of Christ's mission and character.

If, then, we assume that John wrote this narrative, we have in it the testimony of an eye-witness to certain facts. Whether John was critical or not critical, whether he was superstitious or rational, whether he was scientific or unscientific, has nothing to do with the credibility of his narrative. It would have a great deal to do with his conclusions from the narrative, but he draws no conclusions. It would have a great deal to do with his opinions respecting the narrative, but he expresses no opinions. He does not even say that any miracle was wrought, or that a dead man was raised from the dead. He simply tells his readers what he saw and heard, and leaves them to draw their own conclusions. "He was with Jesus beyond Jordan; word came to them that Lazarus was sick; Jesus remained where he was two days; then he told the disciples that Lazarus was dead; when they reached Bethany they found a scene of mourning; the friends had come, according to Jewish custom, to console the sister's family; both sisters stated impliedly and reproachfully that Lazarus was dead; when they arrived at the grave, one of them said that he had been dead four days, and that corruption—though this apparently was only her presumption—had already commenced. Christ directed the stone to be rolled away, commanded in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come forth,' and he came forth, bound in his grave-clothes. A scientific commission could not have reported the facts with more absolute impartiality. The writer expresses no opinion whatever respecting the occurrence. This is not the method of an idealist who has invented the occurrence for the purpose of glorifying his Master, or of a dogmatist who has written it to prove a doctrine; it is the language of a preeminently honest, fair-minded, and impartial witness. And upon this narrative the great mass of readers and students have come to but one conclusion—that to which both friend and foe came at the time—that it was a genuine resurrection of the dead, a great and notable miracle." [1]

[1] Quoted from my Commentary on John, Chapter XI.

There are three accounts of resurrection from the dead wrought by Christ. The first is that of the daughter of Jairus, who had just died as Christ was approaching the house. The second is that of the son of the widow of Nain, who was being borne to his burial. The third is that of Lazarus, who had been dead for four days. The first might perhaps be explained away by supposing that the girl had fallen into a faint. Even the second might be regarded as a case of suspended animation. But the third is inexplicable upon any so-called naturalistic hypothesis. If one supposes, as many apparently do, that death is really the cessation of existence, and that there is no personal life beyond the grave, these stories of resurrection must necessarily seem incredible. But the question, If a man die, shall he live again? is precisely the question on which the New Testament, with its accounts of resurrection, throws a great flood of light. To suppose that he cannot live again is a purely gratuitous assumption. Let us, on the contrary, suppose that death is simply the separation of the spirit from the body, that the spirit is not remote, or, at least, not necessarily remote, from its previous habitation, then there is nothing incredible in supposing that the spirit may return again to the body which it has left, and, if the body has not already begun to disintegrate, may reanimate the body.

I have left myself no space to consider here the spiritual significance of this wonderful narrative. It must suffice to say, in a sentence, that he who believes in the resurrection narrative of the New Testament will believe with the poet—

> All souls are Thine:
> We must not say
> That those are dead who pass away;
> From this our world of flesh set free,
> We know them living unto Thee.

CHAPTER XXIX.—SUNDRY INCIDENTS AND TEACHINGS

Luke xvii., 11–19; xviii., 1–14; Mark x., 2–16

The dates of the incidents and instructions which the author of The Bible Study Union Lessons has grouped together for our study to-day are very uncertain. It is probable, indeed I think indubitable, that the instructions respecting the end of the world contained in the close of the seventeenth chapter of Luke are to be identified with those given by Christ in Jerusalem during the Passion, and more fully repeated in Matthew, chapter xxiv. The two parables respecting prayer, that of the unjust judge and that of the Pharisee and the publican, may belong at any time in Christ's ministry, but as they are narrated only by Luke, and only Luke gives any considerable account of the Perean ministry, it is not unreasonable to suppose that they belong in that epoch. The instructions respecting divorce and those respecting little children are also generally attributed to the same time and place. The only fact throwing any light on the occasion of the incident respecting the ten lepers is in the statement that it occurred as Jesus was going to Jerusalem and passing along the borders of Samaria and Galilee—that is, from the west to the east, toward the Jordan, a route, in going to Jerusalem from Galilee, frequently taken by the Jews for the purpose of avoiding Samaria.

When a leper was cured, before he could be restored to society he was required to show himself to the priest, make an offering, and be officially pronounced clean. Thus Christ's command to the lepers implied a promise of cure; and their acceptance of the command was an indication of remarkable trust in his word. I do not think that we are to suppose that the nine were wholly ungrateful for the cure which was wrought in them. They were commanded by the Jewish law to present themselves to the priest, and

this command had been reinforced by the word of Christ. Literal obedience required that they should proceed at once to Jerusalem without delay and without turning back. Moreover, they may not unnaturally have thought that there was some hazard of losing the cure if they did not proceed to the priest. This would not have been a very reasonable fear, but superstition is not reasonable. The contrast between the one leper who returned and the nine who did not is that between the love which disregards the letter of the law in order to manifest gratitude, and the obedience which adheres to the ritual but disregards the impulses of love. The Jews adhered to the law and forgot their benefactor; the Samaritan returned to thank the benefactor, and for the time forgot the law; and Christ commended the latter.

As in the parable of the neighbor coming at midnight to his friend's door and asking for food, and again in the parable of the unjust steward (Luke xi., 1–13; xvi., 1–8), Christ illustrates the accessibility of God to prayer by a strange contrast. Is prayer of any real use? Is it only a kind of spiritual gymnastics by which we exercise ourselves? This question has been often repeated, and the most orthodox divines have sometimes taught, or seemed to teach, that prayer cannot really influence God. Thus Professor Allen, in his life of Jonathan Edwards, says of that great divine: "He had already put himself on record to the effect that the object of prayer is not to change God's will, but suitably to affect our own hearts and so prepare us to receive the blessings we ask." A similar view of prayer will be found presented at very considerable length and urged with considerable eloquence in one of Theodore Parker's sermons. Now, Christ's parable replied to this philosophy by a striking illustration. We are able to affect one another; not merely by giving new information, throwing new light, urging new and before unrecognized considerations, but by the direct influence of soul on soul. The intensity of desire itself influences. It influences even the most obdurate and hard-hearted. That is not a true philosophy which refuses to take account of the actual facts of life, and it is an actual fact of life that spirit influences spirit and the desire of one soul moves the will of another. If so in human relations, why not

also and much more in the relationship between the human soul and God?

The kind of character which draws near to God, the kind of desire that has influence with him, is illustrated in the other parable. The Pharisee of this parable is by no means a bad man. He would represent pretty well a reasonably high standard of the religious life as it is held to-day. His life is conformed to the moral law. He is scrupulous in his observance of religious rites, and he gives liberally to the support of the Church. But he is satisfied with himself, and does not really desire anything of God, unless it be God's approbation, still further to inflate his self-conceit. And he does not draw so near to God as the outcast, ashamed of himself, standing afar off, and feeling a great need of divine mercy.

There is no place here in a paragraph to treat the difficult and perplexing subject of divorce and Christ's instructions respecting it. I can only remind my readers that it is always a mistake to treat Christ's instructions as if they were statute laws. They are the expression of great principles, and still more of a divine spirit. In the time of Christ, both in Palestine and in Rome, the husband might dismiss his wife without any trial, as with us one may dismiss a domestic. Moses only provided that he should give her a statement of the reason why she was dismissed, that she might not suffer under unjust suspicions. I do not affirm that if Christ were living in our day he would recognize the right of society, by regular judicial proceedings, to decree a divorce for any other ground than that of adultery, but it is not clear that he might not do so. Only by implication can any rules for incorporation in civil legislation be deduced from Christ's instructions here, which are addressed to the individual under a very different civilization than our own. But the duty for the individual is plain. It is always that of patience, gentleness, forbearance, long-suffering. The rushing into separation as a quick and easy escape from connubial infelicity is clearly against the spirit of Christ's teaching.

It is clearly impossible, also, to go at any length into an exposition of the passage of Christ's blessing little children. I cannot see that it throws any light on infant baptism, though the propriety of infant baptism has some-

times been deduced from it. But, on the other hand, it seems clearly to teach that little children belong in Christ's kingdom, irrespective of any parental faith, and certainly irrespective of any act of parental consecration. For it is not stated that the children whom Christ blessed were brought by their parents, much less were blessed for their parents' sake. The little child is God's by reason of his birth and his childhood. Our sin is the greater if, by our false teaching or our evil example, we lead him away from God, or interpose any obstacle between him and God.

CHAPTER XXX.—THE LAST JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

Mark x., 17–45; Luke xviii., 18–34

The earthly career of Jesus of Nazareth is now drawing to its tragical close. He has preached the Gospel in Galilee, and the twelve disciples have carried the message of the kingdom as its heralds to all the smaller villages; but Galilee, though at times it seemed to enthusiastically receive its Prophet, had no inclination for a Gospel so catholic as to include in its blessings the whole world, and so spiritual as to seek its results only through self-sacrifice. By a sudden change of popular feeling, by no means uncommon in history, the people had passed from endeavoring to crown Jesus as their king to abandoning him when he spoke of sacrifice in the synagogue at Capernaum. He had preached the Gospel in Judea, so far as we have any record, chiefly, if not exclusively, in its capital. Here his disciples could render him no aid. There is, indeed, little indication that the twelve Apostles were even habitually with him. John alone has given any extended report of this period of his ministry—John, whose fidelity and quiet courage no peril was able to daunt. Rejected by Jerusalem, he had preached the Gospel in Perea—the region beyond Jordan. Here seventy apostles, commissioned for the purpose, had carried the message of the kingdom throughout this larger district, with its scattered and diverse populace. Here, too, he was listened to with interest, but not accepted as the Messiah. The time of instruction had now come substantially to its close. Jesus, knowing full well the fate that awaited him, set his face, as one of the evangelists has it, steadfastly toward Jerusalem. His disciples followed him, afraid and amazed.[1] They believed, what was, indeed, true, that he was going to Jerusalem to fulfill the last act of preparation and receive

[1] The incident in Luke ix., 51, is not there placed in its chronological order.

his coronation. It is true that Christ told them, in perfectly explicit terms, that he would be delivered to the Gentiles, insulted, abused, crucified; but this they could not believe. Christ was a perpetual enigma to his most intimate friends. They could not and did not understand him. When he spoke parables, they understood him literally; when he spoke in plain and unenigmatical language, they thought he was speaking in parables. So, despite strange sinking of the heart, amazement, fear, dark forebodings,[1] they followed after him; too awestricken to inquire his meaning, too full of their own notions respecting the kingdom of God and the conditions of its success to be able to receive and understand his prophecies.

So it was not altogether strange that two of his disciples, taking their mother with them to reinforce their request, came to ask of him high office in the kingdom when it should be established. It was not very noble, this attempt to steal a march on their comrades, and no wonder the ten were displeased when they heard of it. And yet their displeasure indicated that in them also there was something of the same greed of place and power. If Christ foresaw the details of his crucifixion, if he knew that he was to be crucified between two thieves, one on his right hand and one on his left, there must have been something infinitely pathetic to him in this request from two faithful and dear friends that they might occupy these places of honor in his glory—for his cross is his glory. Certainly they did not know what they asked. One can but wonder whether afterwards they did understand it, when they looked upon the three crosses, under the shadow of the great darkness.

If his own most intimate disciples so little understood the immediate future, it is not strange that others did not understand it. It is in the light of this history that we must interpret the story of the Rich Young Ruler. This young man was an officer in a Jewish synagogue. He belonged presumptively to the better party of the Pharisees—those who believed that to love God with all one's heart and one's neighbor as one's self is indeed the summary of the law. He had certainly been affected by the fame of Jesus's teaching, and it is reasonable to suppose that he

[1] Mark x., 32.

had been moved by the teaching itself. That he was very much in earnest in his purpose, and really stirred to a humble loyalty, is indicated by the facts stated by Mark, that he came running, and kneeled to Jesus in the public road. That there was some real sincerity in him is evident from the fact that Jesus, looking on him, loved him. But he had no conception—who did at that time?—that the kingdom of God was a kingdom of patience, suffering, self-sacrifice, martyrdom. This truth Christ put before him tersely in the simple direction to sell all that he had and enter the little band of twelve, on precisely the same conditions on which they had entered it—for they had given up all to become his followers. And yet, that they shared the rich young ruler's misapprehension, and shared also his expectation of an earthly and immediate recompense for a temporary sacrifice—which they had faith enough to make, but he had not—is indicated by Peter's somewhat egotistical question, "Lo, we have left all, and followed thee; what then shall we have?"

To my mind, there is scarcely any epoch in the life of Christ, not excepting Gethsemane and the Passion itself, more full of pathos than these last days, when Jesus was surrounded by friends who would not and could not understand him. He, full of a deepening sorrow, presently to break forth in tears over Jerusalem; they, full of an increasing gladness, presently to break forth in shouts of Hosanna in the triumphal procession.

CHAPTER XXXI.—APPROACHING JERUSALEM

Mark x., 46-52; Luke xix., 1-28; John xi., 55—xii., 11

As Jesus approaches Jerusalem on his last journey thither, he falls in with the crowds who are thronging to the Holy City for the Passover celebration. The Galileans, in order to avoid passing through heretical and inhospitable Samaria, often crossed the River Jordan a little below the Sea of Galilee, passed down the eastern bank, and, recrossing the Jordan not far from Jericho, approached Jerusalem from the east. Into this pilgrim throng Christ and his disciples, coming to Jerusalem from Perea, naturally entered. The murmurs of the multitude, sometimes growing into shouts and hosannas, were not sufficient to deafen the ears of Christ to the cry of need. Despite the protests of the throng, who thought it an impertinence that the King coming to his coronation should be disturbed by a blind beggar, he stopped, called Bartimeus to him, and gave him his sight. By one of those common inconsistencies in such a crowd, the very people who had first rebuked the beggar and told him to still his cry, when Christ halted and called for Bartimeus, turned to him jubilant, saying, "Cheer up, rise, he calls thee." One who believes that Jesus Christ is, in little things as in great, the manifestation of God, will see in this incident an illustration of the truth that the hosannas of praise are never so loud as to prevent the Father from hearing the cry of his suffering children for pity.

The fame of the coming King has gone on before him, and curiosity as well as enthusiasm attracts multitudes to the highway along which he is passing. Among those thus attracted is a tax-gatherer, who is hated in the community, as all tax-gatherers were in that age, most of them not without good reason, since under the tax system an honest tax-gatherer was an impossibility. He is short of stature, and he desires to avoid, perhaps, the jeers and jostling of an inimi-

cal crowd, so he climbs a fig-tree, whose low, wide-spreading, horizontal branches make it easy to find a seat there. The astonishment of the crowd is not less than his own when Christ stops, looks up into the tree, bids him come down, and invites himself to be the tax-gatherer's guest. His choice is justified by the result; the moral sentiment of Zaccheus is crystallized into a resolve by the presence of the Master; he struggles to his feet and declares his penitence and his purpose of reform: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I will give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I will restore fourfold." This is a kind of repentance which the dullest can comprehend and the least evangelical applaud.

As we shall see later, the disciples and the people were alike possessed of the idea that Christ was going up to Jerusalem to deliver Israel from the Roman yoke and to become the King of his people; and so thoroughly possessed of this idea were they that nothing which Christ could say sufficed to dispossess them of it. The parable of the ten pounds is in construction analogous to the parable in Matthew of the ten talents, but its scope and purpose are different. The primary object of the parable in Matthew, addressed solely to Christ's disciples, is to teach the necessity of fidelity and the truth that property is a trust, not a personal possession. The primary object of the parable in Luke, which is addressed to all the people, is to teach that the kingdom of God will not immediately appear; incidentally, how God's servants are to prepare for his appearing, and what is to be the nature of his reckoning with them.

Reaching Bethany, Christ stops there, that he may spend the Sabbath quietly with his friends Mary and Martha and Lazarus.[1] The sisters serve a supper to Christ at which he, and presumably the twelve disciples, and perhaps other guests, sit down. The love and joy in this household to which Christ has so recently restored the brother, who is also the head of the household—Simon, the father, being either dead or an exile because of his leprosy[2]—makes the

[1] The chronology is uncertain. I follow here the order adopted by The Bible Study Union Lessons. See my Commentary on Matthew, xxvi., 6, for a discussion of the question of chronology. For a consideration of the reasons for believing this anointing to be different from that reported in Luke vii., 36–50, see my Commentary on John, xii., 1–11, preliminary note.

[2] Matt. xxvi., 6, 7; Mark xiv., 3.

occasion a very sacred one. The ointment of pure spikenard, which we may suppose had been procured for anointing the body of Lazarus, is too sacred, in the sister's thought, for common use, but not too sacred for the anointing of her Master and her Lord; so what she had purchased to express her affection for her brother, she now bestows as a token of affection to him who had given her brother life again. To the sordid heart of Judas Iscariot expenditure merely for the expression of affection seems a waste. Christ sharply rebukes him for his protest. "Let her alone," he says; "why trouble ye the woman? she hath wrought a good work upon me;" and he declares that the anointing is prophetic and preparatory for his own death and burial.

And still neither Mary nor Martha nor Lazarus, nor the Twelve, not even John with all his insight, can understand that in one short week the prophecy of this anointing will find its fulfillment at the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

The Life of Christ

CHAPTER XXXII.—THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

Mark xi., 1–14

I cannot approach the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem with a feeling of triumph. Palm Sunday appears to me almost the saddest Sunday in the year. The din of the heedless multitude crying, Hosanna to the Son of David, is forgotten as I look upon Christ in a passionate flood of tears in the midst of the rejoicing populace. Let me ask the readers of this chapter to try to look upon this scene as Christ looked upon it, to share his reflections, to sympathize with his grief. Twice it is said of Jesus that he wept. At the grave of Lazarus, surrounded with exclamatory and even artificial grief, tears silently welled up in his eyes and coursed down his cheeks. On the Mount of Olives, surrounded with enthusiastic multitudes, he broke into a passion of what seemed to the onlookers to be uncontrollable grief, strange because of the contrast to the noisy rejoicing of the people.[1]

If Jesus Christ had ever hoped, as he may well have done in the outset of his ministry, that Israel would understand its past history, its divine mission, and its possible glorious future, that hope had died out of his heart. Rejected by Galilee, by Jerusalem, by Perea, it was clear that the kingdom of God was to come, not by the fidelity of Israel and in its glory, but despite the opposition of Israel and over its ruins. The message of Israel to the world was plain: the message which the Christian Church has since interpreted, though in halting and broken sentences. That God is love, that in love he has created and rules the world, that love is the law he has laid down for all his chil-

[1] In John xi., 35, the verb is δακρύω (*dakruo*), to shed tears silently in Luke xix., 41, the verb is κλαίω (*klaio*), to weep *audibly*.

dren, and that by love he would redeem them and bring them into oneness of life and purpose with himself—this was the message of the Old Testament prophets, from the days of Moses to those of John the Baptist. And what in many portions and in divers manners God spake unto the fathers by the prophets, he was now speaking by his Son.[1] But Israel had not accepted the message of the prophets, and would not accept the message of the Son. And it was clear to the spiritual vision of Christ that the message must be given to a new people, that the kingdom of God must be taken from the Jews and given to a nation that would bring forth the fruits thereof.[2] Loving his people, longing for their redemption, and foreseeing their doom, he went up to Jerusalem for the very purpose of putting before the people, gathered in the Holy City on this their Holy Week, the truth which he dreaded but from which he could not escape. The people had clamored for a mighty miracle which would demonstrate his right to their confidence. What he had refused to popular clamor he had granted to sorrowing love. The resurrection of Lazarus had convinced even the rulers of the Sanhedrim of Christ's supernal power, but it had not made them more willing to accept his divine authority, nor more amenable to his sacred influence. On the contrary, its only effect was to intensify and concentrate their opposition to him. It stirred them up to self-reproach, not for rejecting Christ, but for their failure to neutralize his influence. "What are we doing?" they said to one another. "Do we not see that this man is doing many miracles? and if we do not bestir ourselves the people will believe on him, and the Romans will take away our offices from us."[3] For at this time the Jewish officers held their places by sufferance of Rome, whose policy it was to sustain the local authorities in the conquered provinces for the sake of pacifying the people and preventing local insurrections. If the priesthood once lost the confidence of the people, they would lose the support of the Roman Government. For they would have nothing to give in exchange for that support.

From Jericho Christ came to Bethany, the village of Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus. Here he spent the Sabbath. Here the supper was given by the

[1] Heb. i., 1, 2. [2] Matt. xxi., 43. [3] John xi., 47, 48.

sisters in his honor, to him and the twelve; and here he received the prophetic anointing referred to in our last chapter. And hence, on the first day of the week, he started for the Holy City. It did not need a prophet's vision to perceive that he would be greeted as King and Messiah by the populace. It did not need a prophet's vision to perceive that the Temple authorities would put him to death if they could. Their purposes were no secret. Christ foresaw what the issue would be: on the one side an ignorant popular enthusiasm, unorganized, misconceiving his mission and misdirected in its zeal; on the other, an implacable, powerful, and crafty faction, skillful in inflaming popular prejudice, and backed by the power of the Roman Government, with which it was in corrupt partnership. But he definitely resolved to meet the issue; because he definitely foresaw that only by his martyrdom could he inspire the world with his spirit and give to it his life. Knowing that this short-lived triumph is the beginning of the end, that he is marching to his death amid the plaudits of the multitude, and that they are preparing, not only for his death, but for the doom of the nation, he calmly gives the directions to his disciples to make ready for a triumphant entrance into the city which is to crucify him.

But his disciples do not share his vision. They believe that at last they are to have their way; that their Master is going to proclaim himself King and set the nation free at once from Roman and from priestly domination. Their enthusiasm knows no bounds. Some go before; some follow after; some, hearing of the approach, come out from Jerusalem to meet the procession. One enthusiastic follower takes off his burnoose and binds it on the colt to form a saddle for the King. Others cast their burnooses before him that he may ride upon a cloaked and garmented highway. Others climb the trees and cut down branches to strew before him; still others gather leaves and rushes for the same purpose. Then, by a spontaneous movement, the crowd catch up the great Hallel chanted at the Paschal feast, and sing it in antiphonal strains:

Save, now, I beseech thee, O Lord;
Response. O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.
Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord;
Response. We have blessed you out of the house of the Lord.

God is the Lord which hath shewed us light;
Response. Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.
Thou art my God, and I will praise thee;
Response. Thou art my God, I will exalt thee.
All together. O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever.

So, singing, shouting, running before, following after, strewing cloaks, rushes, palm-branches in the way, the increasing procession climbed the hill and came in sight of the Holy City. The people saw the great Temple shining in the sun, and crowds hastening out from the city gates to meet the King and add their greetings to those that sounded across the intervening valley from the crown of the hill.

But Christ saw a far different spectacle. With prophetic vision he saw the Roman soldiery laying siege to the beautiful city; he saw the trenches cast up about it, and the battering-rams encircling it, and the crucifixes with the Jewish prisoners hanging on them, and the walls crumbling beneath the assaults of the ballistæ, and the city given up to sack and flame and cruel outrage, and the Temple a heap of ruins, and the Roman banners flying in the very Holy of Holies. The contrast was too great to be borne, and he broke out into a passionate outcry of grief: "If thou hadst known, even thou, yea, even in this thy day of mercy, what would tend unto thy peace! But it is hid from thine eyes."

O blind and slow of heart to believe! Strange blindness—strange, but common. For still the world is full of men who cannot discern the signs of the times; who misread shame for glory, and glory for shame; who think that great cities, warehouses, railroads, are the symbol of national glory and the guarantee of national strength and perpetuity; who do not know that the Mayflower was a grander vessel than the modern ocean greyhound; and a Puritan village, with its quiet life of heroism and self-denial, was more glorious than a modern Babylon, with its life of luxury and self-indulgence; and that the strength and perpetuity of a nation lie in its fidelity to its message and its mission and the heed it gives to its prophets.

One more effort Christ made to teach his disciples the worthlessness of this vociferous enthusiasm. It was on the

following day. They came to a fig-tree, full of promising leaves, but with no fruit upon it. If I read the narrative aright, he did not curse the tree; he foretold its inevitable future. He saw that death which had already taken hold of it, and said, "No one will ever eat fruit of thee." And the next day the visible signs of decay showed themselves even to the disciples. The fruitless vineyard was to the reader of the Hebrew prophets a familiar analogue of an apostate nation.[1] But the disciples could not, for they would not, understand. We shall see in succeeding chapters how Christ reiterated this simple message, and how the disciples, not less than the populace, refused to receive it. Not till they heard his death-cry, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit," and saw his head drop upon his breast, did they believe that he must die that the world might live; and not even then did they believe that Judaism must die in giving birth to Christianity.

[1] Isa. v., 1–7.

REMARK.—Whether there was a second cleansing of the Temple is not certain. The act has already been treated in these papers, in the order in which it is placed by John. See Chapter VII. of this Life.

CHAPTER XXXIII.—THE CHALLENGE

Mark xi., 20—xii., 12; Matt. xxi., 20—xxii., 14

The ecclesiastics of Jerusalem recognized in the triumphal entry of Jesus Christ into the Holy City a challenge to their authority. If we are to suppose that there was, as is indicated by the synoptic narratives, a second cleansing of the Temple, the challenge was not merely indicated, it was very vigorously offered. They found themselves assailed in the very citadel of their power, the Temple itself, and they challenged the challenger. "Who givest thee authority to do these things?" they indignantly demanded. The indignation was not assumed; it was real; it was the indignation of ecclesiastics whose assumption of an exclusive right to speak and act in the name of the Lord has been rudely called in question. Christ answered their demand by making one on them: "What was the authority of John the Baptist?" They were clever enough to discern the dilemma. They dared not deny his authority—to do so would be to weaken their own, since all men counted John as a prophet; nor affirm it, for they had treated John's message as cavalierly as they treated Christ's. They shrank from the test; and Christ, with a hero's contempt for cowards, refused to discuss with them the question of his authority.

We are not to regard this as a simple politic ruse to get the better of troublesome but unscrupulous opponents. Christ's question was vital; it goes to the root of this problem. What is the test of authority in matters of religion? If authority depends, as the ecclesiastics of all ages would have us believe, on special appointment, neither John nor Jesus was the authorized bearer of a divine message. For though John was the son of a priest, there is no indication that he was ever inducted into the priesthood; and Jesus not only never received any ecclesiastical ordination or recognition of any description, but it was

cast in his teeth that he had never had any theological training.[1] But if the possession of a divine spirit and of the power to utter divine truth so as to convict men of sin and awaken them to righteousness is a sufficient demonstration of authority to utter such message, then both John and Jesus had, in the results of their ministry, their credentials given to them. It was impossible to deny Jesus's authority without denying not only that of John the Baptist, but also that of the long line of Hebrew prophets, who were without ecclesiastical position, ordination, recognition, or appointment of any kind. Ecclesiasticism had not yet reached a point such that even the Jewish priesthood could venture to make such a denial—which would claim authority for Zedekiah the priest and deny it to Jeremiah the prophet, recognize it in Caiaphas and refuse to see it in Christ.

The challengers silenced, Christ in turn challenges them.

The Temple was built in a series of courts, one within the other. The outermost court, that of the Gentiles, was open to all the people, regardless of their social condition, ecclesiastical character, race, or religion. It was the intellectual and religious exchange of Jerusalem, the meeting-place of all the people. Here Christ took up his position, and here in public teaching he challenged the scribes, who claimed a monopoly of truth, and the priesthood, who claimed a monopoly of worship. He embodies this challenge in three parables: simple stories, by which he not only catches and enchains the attention of the multitude, but so veils his ultimate purpose that they do not see the application of the story until it is ended—and then they cannot get away from it. Once at least he puts a question to them at the close, by the suddenness of his question elicits their answer, and then shows them what they have said, and how it bears upon themselves.

Of two sons, one of whom promised obedience and disobeyed, the other of whom refused obedience and obeyed, which is the better? Which will you choose for your son, Profession or Practice? Practice, of course. Yes! What, then, will you say of a people which is prodigal of profession and barren of practice; which is continually saying, I go, sir, and never going?

[1] John vii., 15.

A man had a vineyard which he let out to a tenantry. But when he sent his servants to collect the rent, which was payable in kind, the tenantry beat the servants; and when finally he sent his son to call them to a reckoning, they killed the son. What will the owner do to them? What ought he to do? "Miserable fellows! miserably will he destroy them, and let out the vineyard to honest tenants," cries some one in the throng. "Surely!" replies Christ. "And you have yourself uttered the doom of this nation. The kingdom of God will be taken from it, and given to a people that will bring forth the fruits of the kingdom." But they cannot endure this application of the principle, though they have themselves declared its justice. "God forbid!" they cry; and yet courage and truth always find response in a multitude, and the priesthood dare not lay hands on Christ for fear of the multitude, who see in him a prophet of Jehovah.

The third story is a new adaptation of a parable which, in a different form, Christ has used before.[1] A king gives a wedding feast. His subjects are in revolt against him, and treat his invitation contemptuously. Some scoff at the invitation; some mob the heralds who bring the invitation. The king sends out his army and subjugates the province and punishes the mob. A second invitation is not treated so cavalierly. But of those who come some are loyal and true, some are not; and one man ventures to show his contempt for the king by coming to the feast in his common laborer's apparel. That this was not because he was too poor to pay proper respect to his host is clear from the fact that when he is called to account he has no defense to offer. He is bound hand and foot and thrust out into the night.

Loyalty, love, service, are individual matters. A loyal nation will not save an individual from the effects of his own disloyalty; a disloyal nation will not involve in its own condemnation the loyal individual. The children's teeth will not be set on edge because the fathers have eaten sour grapes. The son who says, "I go, sir," and goes not; the tenantry who forget that their possessions are a trust

[1] For the reasons for believing that this is not a mere different report of the parable of the Wedding Feast in Luke xiv., 15-24, see my Commentary on Matthew, ch. xxii., 1-14, preliminary note.

and use them for themselves; and the individual who professes his loyalty by accepting the king's invitation, but shows his contempt for the king by making no personal preparation to be worthy of the king's companionship, are all alike condemned. The Jewish priesthood are under this triple condemnation. They have professed much loyalty to Jehovah; but they are not doing Jehovah's work of sowing the seeds of righteousness in the world. They have taken his gifts of light and liberty and truth, and have not recognized them as trusts, but, in contempt of God and man, have shut out the pagan world from participation in them. They have chanted, without comprehending, the ancient Psalm:

> Who shall ascend into the hill of Jehovah?
> Or who shall stand in his holy place?
> He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;
> Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity,
> And hath not sworn deceitfully.
> He shall receive the blessing from Jehovah,
> And righteousness from the God of his salvation.

They have thought they could come into the Temple and the companionship of God without divineness of character, and could see God and sit at his table without being pure in heart.

By these parables Christ prepares the way for still more explicit teaching, soon to follow, in denunciation of priestly false pretense.

CHAPTER XXXIV.—DAYS OF CONFLICT

Matt. xxii., 15—xxiii., 37

Christ's gentleness and meekness were certainly not the fruits of timidity or irresolution. It would not be easy to find in history an instance of a reformer more beset by conflicting forces, agreed in nothing except hostility to him, or one meeting the attacks of various foes with more sangfroid, parrying their thrusts with more skill, or more evidently worsting them in the encounter. In the last day of conflict, described most fully in Matthew, the result of the strange conspiracy between Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians is to expose their plots and subject them at the end to what is perhaps the most scathing philippic in literature.

With much semblance of flattering respect, some of the Pharisees, commingling with the Herodians, submit a question respecting the tribute. The Herodians were apostate politicians and supporters of the Roman Government. They came to the front in presenting this question: "Is it lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar?" If Christ answered Yes, he inflamed against himself the popular prejudice of a people to whom tribute was doubly odious, first as a tax imposed on a race who have never been very ready to part with their money, and second as a badge of the political bondage of a people naturally haughty and independent. If he answered No, the use his interlocutors would have made of his reply is indicated by the false charge they preferred a little later concerning him to Herod: "We found this fellow perverting the nation and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar." It did not take great sagacity to see through their device; but how to meet it was not so clear. Christ called for a coin of the realm, asked them whose image and superscription it bore, and when they answered, "Cæsar's," responded with the saying, ever since famous, "Render unto Cæsar the things

that are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's." In accepting the benefits of Cæsar's government—among other benefits his coinage—they bound themselves to loyalty to that government. The same principle bound them to loyalty to God's government. And they were disloyal to both.

Then the Sadducees made their experiment. They were the unbelievers and materialists of Palestine. They invented and brought to him a story of a woman with seven successive husbands, and asked Christ triumphantly to whom she would belong in the celestial sphere. His answer has always seemed to me as inconsistent with the notion of a hades in which disembodied spirits wait for a future resurrection, or of "a long and dreary sleep" to be followed by some far-away general resurrection, as it is with the doctrine that "death ends all." "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Then Abraham and Isaac and Jacob are and were living—neither sleeping the last and fatal sleep, nor a long sleep in which life is as it were suspended, nor dwelling in some imperfect form of life to be perfected by a future resurrection. They are living; living now; and full of life, not half living. As to the problems which we endeavor to carry over into the other world from this, the answer to them all is that we "know not the power of God." We understand present forms of life; but not the forms of the life to come.

The Pharisees brought to him the third question. Pharisaism had robbed the simple religion of the prophets—doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly before God—of its simplicity, by dividing Judaism into schools and sects. Instead of concentrating their life's energies on the one work of fulfilling God's law in life and in character, they frittered their energies away in profitless debates. Among other questions they debated was this: Which is the greatest of the commandments? One laid stress on the moral, another on the ceremonial, law; one on the sacrifices, another on the Sabbath, a third on ritualistic regulations concerning prayer and fasting, a fourth on ablutions, and so on, with many variations. To Christ there came some of these Pharisees, demanding that he declare himself. To which school did he belong? Which did he

regard as the chief commandment? Much as now a congregation might demand of a preacher, Tell us frankly, are you Baptist or Pedobaptist? Independent or Episcopalian? Calvinist or Arminian? Trinitarian or Unitarian? Christ's reply sets all such schools and sects aside. There is but one commandment—love. The consecration in love of the whole nature to God; the service in love, through all the life, of humanity—this is the whole duty of man.

The critics of Jesus Christ retiring from their interviews discomfited, he addresses them a question respecting the Messiah whom they are expecting. "Whose son is he?" "The son of David;" in the royal line; and coming—this is the natural deduction—to reinstate the kingdom of David. What, then, do they make of David's inspired recognition of his lordship and his supreme and mystical priesthood?[1] Clearly, in David's inspired thought of the Messiah, there was some one more than a successor to David, something in his anticipated reign of more than a mere reinstatement of David's authority. The Pharisees cannot answer; their conception of the Messiah and his reign they cannot reconcile with the prophetic *motif*, which continually reappears, in melodic fragments, in the Old Testament, from Moses to Malachi. Official interpreters as they are of the Old Testament, they cannot reconcile their conceptions of the Messiah and his reign with any intelligible conceptions of the Old Testament prophecy.

Then Christ turns to his disciples and to the multitude, and, pointing to the self-constituted religious leaders of the people, launches into that philippic against them reported in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew. It is directed, not against the Herodians, the corrupt politicians, not against the Sadducees, the materialists and infidels, but against the Scribes and Pharisees, the leaders of Jewish orthodoxy. Limits of time and space forbid any interpretation of this address, but a few words may be said respecting the general spirit. We may read it as a lament: Alas for you, Scribes and Pharisees! The original words may perhaps bear this construction, but it does not seem to me consonant with the structure and tone of the address. We may read it as a pure invective; a volcano of wrath untempered by love. But this does not consist with its

[1] See Psa. cx., to which Christ refers.

close, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . how often would I have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" I believe that its method is rebuke, but its end is love. Christ has come to seek and to save the lost. He who recognizes himself and is recognized by the world as a sinner does not need rebuke; he needs counsel, hope, courage. He knows already that the way of transgressors is hard, but he knows not how to find a better way, or lacks the courage to make the effort. To the publicans, the harlots, the drunkards, in short, the recognized "sinners," Christ does not speak in words of condemnation. He shows them a way of escape, and reaches out a hand to help them to take it. But the man who thinks he is virtuous because he is religious, who devours widows' houses and satisfies his conscience with long prayers, who pays tithes of mint and anise, and so compromises for omitting judgment, mercy, and faithfulness, whose religious zeal is all expended in making proselytes, so that he has none left for making character, who, in short, is incased in an armor of self-conceit, can be saved only by being humiliated. He must be disrobed and unmasked before the public; must be made to see himself as others see him; must be told to his face what others have said behind his back, and told it in public that he may be humiliated. The self-conceited man can be saved only as his self-conceit is punctured. If the reader will compare the fifteenth chapter of Luke with the twenty-third chapter of Matthew, he will get some light on the question when the follower of Christ should preach the Law and when the Gospel; whom he should encourage and whom he should rebuke.

With the close of this chapter the battle between Christ and Judaism comes to its close. He has openly denounced the loveless religion which holds sway in Jerusalem. Its humiliated and embittered leaders are strengthened in their purpose and renew their plans of revenge.

CHAPTER XXXV.—THE GREEKS' COMING TO JESUS

Mark xii., 41–44; John xii., 20–50

In coming from last week's lesson to this week's we seem almost to pass from one teacher to another. Christ's instructions in the Temple, as they are reported by Matthew, are perfectly clear. There is no misunderstanding their import or their connection. Christ's soliloquy—for it is hardly more than that—as reported by John in this chapter is mystical in its spirit, and the connection of its parts is far from self-evident. There are, I think, two reasons for this contrast. In the first place, we must all recognize that a great variety of thought and style is not uncommon in men of the greatest genius. Between such a sweet summer idyl as "As You Like It" and such a tragic character-study as "Hamlet" there is quite as great a difference—of another kind, of course—as between the Sermon on the Mount as reported by Matthew and the Sermon at Capernaum as reported by John. The differences between certain sermons of Henry Ward Beecher are not perhaps as great, but are scarcely less striking. But the genius of a great man is not imparted to his reporters; and when we are dependent on reporters for all that we know of his addresses, we must expect just what we find in the case of Jesus—very great differences between those aspects of his teaching presented by such a mind as that of Matthew and those indicated by such a writer as John. Each reports what strikes him, or, to use Coleridge's phrase, "finds him." In addition to this, it is not at all unreasonable, nor at all inconsistent with any rational doctrine of inspiration, to suppose that each reporter has given us, not a verbatim report, but one translated and interpreted in the reporter's language; that, accordingly, we have the discourses of Jesus Christ, to some extent, interpreted as well as reported by the four Evangelists. Moreover, it is not improbable that John knew the sub-

stance of the other three Gospels, wrote after they were written, and in order to supply, not merely certain incidents and instructions, but also certain phases of character, which they had failed to indicate.

John, then, writing after the destruction of Jerusalem and the missionary progress of Christianity in Greece and Rome, looks back to the teachings of Jesus in the Temple, and recalls the incident which at the time the Apostles did not and could not understand, but which the subsequent flocking of the Gentiles to the Christian Church interpreted. At this very hour, when the Herodians, the Sadducees, and the Pharisees were making common cause against Christ, when the chief priests and the scribes were counseling how they might slay him, when Judas had already planned the treacherous betrayal of his Master—at this very hour certain Greeks who had come up to the feast to worship, heathen who had accepted Jehovah as the true God, and in so far had accepted the Jewish religion, came to one of Christ's disciples and sought an introduction to their Master. Christ saw in this incident the beginning of the fulfillment of the ancient prophecy: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. . . . And Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."[1] This prophecy forms at once the inspiration and the theme of his monologue, I might almost say his soliloquy.

This advance guard of the Gentiles is the witness that the hour in which Judaism rejects the Christ begins the era of his acceptance by the Gentile world. Judea rejects him that Greece and Rome and Germany and Great Britain and America may accept him. Thus his rejection is his triumph; his death is his victory; his crucifixion is his exaltation. This is the law of life. Death ministers to life; is its precursor, is its necessary condition. The egg must be broken that the bird may fly; the seed must die that the plant may live. So in the evolution of life each order perishes in giving birth to a new order; each civilization seems to fail that not only upon but out of its ruins a better civilization may be constructed. The decline and fall of the Roman Empire is the birth and development of a new European Empire, the end of which is not yet.

[1] Isa. lx., 1, 3.

So each leader dies in order that he may lead. His principles and his spirit are disseminated more widely after his departure than before. Being dead he not only speaketh, but speaketh with a voice more persuasive and far-reaching. The blood of the martyr is the seed of the Church, a seed which death's breath wafts over a continent, whereas before it was confined to the immediate congregation and the local discipleship. The ministry of the martyred Huss has been a thousand-fold more influential than that of an unmartyred Huss could have been.

Thus does death minister to life. The Christ must die that he may live; must be humiliated that he may be exalted; must depart that he may abide forever. Such a departure does not bring darkness, but light. It is itself illuminating. Not to see the glory in self-sacrifice, in death, in the cross, is to be blind. To see it and follow it is to go into ever clearer light, to receive ever clearer vision. It is to become a child of the light; born of light; possessor of the same glory. For it is by reflecting as from a mirror this image of the Lord that we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory.[1] The man who cannot see this glory, or, seeing, does not aspire to possess it and does not follow after to attain it, need not be judged by another; he is self-judged. Life and light have come into the world, and he will have none of them. He is self-blinded, self-condemned, and self-punished.

Something like this seems to me the monologue of Christ, inspired by the coming of the Greeks to see him.

[1] 2 Cor. iii., 18, New Version.

CHAPTER XXXVI.—PROPHECY OF THE SECOND COMING[1]

Matt., chaps. xxiv. and xxv.

The disciples, like most pious Jews, I might almost say like most pious people even now, confounded religion with its instruments and symbols. Religion was identified in their minds with Jerusalem, the Temple, the priests, the sacrificial system. So we identify religion with our churches, our liturgies, our prayer-meetings, our creeds. It is difficult for a Roman Catholic to comprehend how one can be religious and not reverence the host; for an Episcopalian to recognize the religion of one who does not appreciate the service; for a Puritan to believe one is religious who does not care for a prayer-meeting; for a Calvinist to think that religion can survive if the Calvinistic creed should suffer demolition. It was, in like manner, almost impossible for a devout Jew to believe that religion could survive if the Temple and its system were destroyed. This was the charge against Stephen, that he blasphemed—that is, spoke against religion—because he asserted that the Temple would be destroyed and the customs of Moses changed.[2] When, therefore, Christ told the disciples that the Temple would be so utterly destroyed that not one stone would be left upon another, awestruck, they identified this destruction of the Holy City with the end of the world and that revelation of the Messiah on which their hopes of a greater city and an imperial dominion depended. When, cried they, will Jerusalem be destroyed? and the present dispensation of pagan authority end? and thou reveal thy-

[1] The limitations of space forbid entering in these articles into debatable questions in interpretation. Some scholars regard Matthew xxiv. as a prophecy fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem. This view and the grounds for it will be found well stated by Mr. Barnes in his Commentary; the grounds for the view here taken will be found in Alford's Greek Testament and in my Commentary on Matthew.

[2] Acts vi., 14. This was also the charge against Christ himself. See Matt. xxvi., 61.

self? These questions were poured in upon Christ eagerly by men who regarded them all as different forms of the same question. Christ's answer bids them distinguish; assures them that the end of Jerusalem is not the end of the world, nor to be accompanied by that revelation of himself which they impatiently urge upon him.

Be not deceived, he says; there must be wars, and persecutions, and false doctrine, and apostasies, and the proclamation of the Gospel throughout the world before the end can come (chap. xxiv., 4–14). When, therefore, you see the Roman flags flying on the holy hill, do not think the day of Israel's vindication has arrived, nor believe when men shall tell you that the Messiah is at hand. Flee from the doomed city to the mountains (chap. xxiv., 15–26). For when the Messiah is revealed there will be no room to doubt. That revelation will be sudden and self-evidencing, like the glare of the lightning when it lights up the whole heavens (chap. xxiv., 27). Not till after this long period of tribulations, wars, persecutions, false doctrine, apostasies—not without such signs that they who dread the Messiah's coming will be compelled to recognize him—will be the revelation of his kingdom. And this Jewish race,[1] though exiled and scattered, shall not pass away till that revelation is fulfilled (chap. xxiv., 28–35). Coming suddenly, it will come as a day of judgment; it will come, finding men not looking for it, nor prepared for it; it will find them in their usual employments, and its measurements of character will be as surprising as its advent (chap. xxiv., 36–44). It will find men judging themselves and each other by their power to acquire and to control; counting those men great who have great wealth and exercise great mastery. It will bring to bear a new standard of judgment: one which will count him only faithful and wise who uses his power and possessions to serve others, and will condemn him who has used the one tyrannically to smite his fellow-servants, or the other in self-indulgence to drink with the drunken (chap. xxiv., 45–51). It will find the professed virgins of the bridegroom waiting for his coming. But some of them will have fancied that they can obtain in one instantaneous conversion grace for life, death, and eternity; while others will know that they must pray, Give

[1] Generation in verse 34 is properly race.

us day by day our daily bread; will know that to light the lamp is not enough, it must be kept trimmed and burning; will know that to be Christ's one must abide with Christ. These will go in with the bridegroom to the supper, those will be left without (chap. xxv., 1–13). This day of the Lord will find degrees of faithfulness even among the faithful servants; and their future station and service will be awarded accordingly. For it is fidelity in little things which demonstrates capacity for greater service; while he who thinks that he is virtuous simply because he is not corrupt, and imagines that he is entitled to acquittal because he fancies he has done no harm, will learn that to be useless is to be guilty (chap. xxv., 14–30). For we are put into life that by love we may serve one another; and the test of life, as it will be revealed in that great day, will not be creeds, ceremonies, professions, or even conscious service of Christ, but the possession of a spirit like his, which feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, and visits the stranger, the sick, and the captive.

I have assumed in this interpretation that in these chapters Christ does foretell a real Second Coming of Himself to the earth. There are several canons to be observed in interpreting an enigmatical address like this: for all prophecies are in some measure enigmatical. First, we may consider how the immediate auditors understood it. It is evident from abundant indications that the disciples understood that Christ foretold a Second Coming, and in the anticipation of that Coming they, and the generations immediately following, constantly lived. We may consider how the speaker must have expected to be understood. Any one who is familiar with the current beliefs of Christ's time will find it difficult to see how the disciples could have understood this discourse otherwise than as a prophecy of his real and apparent Second Coming. We may try to divest ourselves of all prepossessions and take the words of the address in their most natural meaning. It is certain that one who thus reads these chapters will get as his first impression that of a prophecy of a Second Coming and a Final Judgment. It requires considerable ingenuity of interpretation to find in them any other meaning. We may look at the discourse as a whole and see what was its moral lesson, and interpret the discourse by the apparent

object of the speaker. The moral lesson of this discourse is several times repeated: "Watch, for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh." But if he is not coming, there is no pertinence in this exhortation to watch. The Second Adventists appear to me to have fallen into an error in endeavoring to ascertain the day and the hour, which Christ declares are unknown even to the angels.[1] Their opponents have fallen into a like error in declaring sometimes that there is no such day, sometimes that it is past, and sometimes that it is far away in the future. In either case there is no significance in the command, Watch. The one have erred by giving a literal interpretation to prophecies which are poetical and pictorial, addressed to the imagination and to be interpreted by the imagination. The other have erred by practically erasing those prophecies from their Bible altogether. That, as the Old Testament epiphanies were a preparation for the New Testament epiphany, so the New Testament epiphany is a preparation for an epiphany yet to come; that the Church is to turn its face toward the future and live in expectation; that its attitude is to be as far removed from that of prying curiosity on the one hand as from that of skeptical indifference on the other; that it is to watch for the coming without undertaking to determine what the Master has left undetermined, How and When the Coming will be—this seems to me the clear teaching of this great discourse.

[1] Matt. xxiv., 36; Mark xiii., 32.

CHAPTER XXXVII.—THE LAST SUPPER

Mark xiv., 12–26; Luke xxii., 24–30; John xiii., 1–30; Matt. xxvi., 26–30

As in the house of Simon the Pharisee the villagers gathered in the courtyard and looked on and listened while Christ sat at supper with his host and his friends, so we gather in an outer court that we may look on at this Last Supper and listen to these last words of the Master to his friends. The sun had sunk behind the hills. The twelve had gathered in an upper chamber prepared for them. In the East even to-day places at the table are assigned according to the rank of those who sit at it. Each man has his proper place. Before the supper began, the twelve wrangled with one another as to who was entitled to the best place at the table. One can almost see Jesus pacing the room, or standing looking out through the darkening window, while the unseemly quarrel goes on. He says no word; lets the fire burn itself out; and when at last they have adjusted it, takes his seat, John at Jesus's right hand leaning upon his bosom, Judas at Christ's left hand, Christ leaning upon him.

Christ took his seat, pronounced the blessing, began the supper, still said no word of rebuke. In the East the feet are not shod, as with us, with shoes; they are sandaled; and it is as much a matter of decency to wash the naked feet before the meal as with us to wash the hands. It is a part of the hospitality of the host to provide water and a servant who shall wash the hot and dusty feet before the meal begins. The disciples in their quarrel for precedence never had thought of that, and, with their feet still soiled, sat, or rather reclined, in Oriental fashion, at the supper-table. Then Christ arose, still said nothing, laid off his outer cloak, took a towel, wrapped it round his waist, took a basin and a ewer of water which the host had provided for the purpose, poured water in the basin, and,

going to one end of the table, began to wash the disciples' feet. They were silent; they dared not speak, and he did not. No word from any one until he came to Peter, who could not endure it, and broke the painful silence. "Thou shalt never wash my feet," he said. "If I wash thee not," replied Christ, "thou hast no part with me." The disciple must accept Christ's rebuke, since Christ's love chooses to inspire it. His sovereignty brooks no questioning. Peter yielded, though not without one more ineffectual remonstrance. "If my feet, why not my face and my hands?" he said. Christ finished the washing, interpreted the lesson involved, and sat down again.

But he could not talk with freedom, for there was one traitor in the room, and the sense of the wickedness of that traitor paralyzed the tongue that nothing but intolerable crime could paralyze. He resolved that the traitor should leave the room before the last sacred conference was had. "One of you here at this table," he said, "shall betray me." They were filled with consternation; but they could not forget their unseemly controversy; they could not forget that feet-washing; they could not at once resent the imputation; no! the lesson was too recent and was burned too deeply in their hearts; and so, instead of denying, they questioned. "Lord, is it I, is it I?" went round the room. Peter beckoned to John, lying on Christ's bosom, to "find out who it was that should betray;" and John, turning to Jesus, said, "Lord, who is it?" But still Jesus answered not; he could not betray even the secret of the betrayer. It was customary in the East, and particularly in the Paschal service, for the administrator of the service to dip a morsel of bread in a cup and pass it to his friends. Jesus simply said: "He to whom I shall give this sop, when I have dipped it, will betray me." But he will give it to them all. He only said what he had said before. Then he dipped it and handed it first to Judas, who must have been close at hand to have received it from the very hand of Jesus. Judas knew what the rest did not know. Thunderstruck, angered, wrathful at the exposure of a secret which he supposed was locked up in his own breast, he breathed out, stammeringly, "Is it I?" Quietly Christ replied to him, "Thou hast said;" and then—the traitor still sitting there—uttered openly the words, and with vigor: "What

thou doest, do quickly." The angered traitor left the room; angered because he thought he had been exposed before them all, not comprehending the love that even to the last covered his sin and left his purpose undisclosed to the other eleven.

In the Paschal supper there was a ritual prescribed, partly by Jewish custom and partly by the old-time law. As the father sat with his children around the table and passed the bread to them, they were bid to ask, What meaneth this? and then he was to say to them, "This bread is the unleavened bread that was broken in the wilderness; this lamb is the lamb that was slain in Egypt; this wine is the wine of the covenant which God made with your fathers." When they came to this ritual in the supper that night, Christ changed it. As he passed the bread to them, he said, not, "This is the unleavened bread which your fathers ate in the wilderness," but, "This bread is my body broken for you." As he passed the cup, he said, not, "This cup is the cup of the covenant which the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob made to your children in Egypt," but, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood which is shed for you;" and then he added the last dying request—the only request he ever made of his followers—"This do in remembrance of me."

I am not going to enter here into a doctrinal discussion of the significance of the Lord's Supper. Yet I pause a moment to note what singular growths have come out of this very simple incident. We have required that men should be members of a church before they can sit down at this Supper. But these twelve were not members of a Christian church. No Christian church had been organized. We have required that they should assent to a creed with certain fundamental articles. These twelve had assented to no creed, to no fundamental articles. We have required that they should be baptized. There is no adequate evidence that any one of these had ever received any kind of baptism, and only an indication that four of them had been baptized by John, not one of them baptized into the Christian Church, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. We have made it a Church ordinance, to be administered only in the church and by a priest or minister. But the Paschal Supper was a family, not a Church,

celebration, and the Paschal lamb was slain, not by the priest, but by some member of the family, usually the father. The Lord's Supper as Christ instituted it was a simple, social meal. The only condition he attached to his invitation was a loving memory. He would have only loyal ones sit at that Paschal table. He would have only those that had sworn to follow him to the death. Not even his mother sat with him; and the traitor was exiled from the table before the bread was broken or the cup was passed.

Then the one—the only, the last, the dying—request of Christ was given to his friends: "Do this in remembrance of me." If they had built some great monument, how we would have traveled longingly that we might look upon it! But had it been built, the rain and the wind and the frost would have eaten into it, and obliterated and destroyed it. Had he said, "Build me some fine cathedral that shall stand as a memory to me," how we would have poured our contributions that somewhere in this world there might be a central temple, over which the cross on which he hung should stand throughout the ages! But the cathedral would have passed into the hands of men corrupted by ambition, and belittled by narrowness, and hardened by dogmatism. He made his monument of loving hearts. Only this do: sometimes sit down together; sometimes remember that last occasion when I grasped the hands of those I loved, looked into their faces, and heard their voices; sometimes sit at a supper-table, eat and drink and think of me. Christ longs to be remembered, as love always longs to be remembered. He wanted not his grave to be obliterated from the earth and trodden under foot of men, as if it were an indifferent thing; he wanted not his name to be blotted out of human memory or his personality to be forgotten from throbbing hearts. He commands us in many things, he guides us in many things, he gives us opportunity to serve his children, his poor, in many ways; but there is only one personal request he makes of us—that, from time to time, at some supper-table, with simply bread and wine, we shall, as they that love him have throughout all ages, perpetuate his memory, and show that we care for his person.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.—THE LAST DISCOURSE

John xiii., 31–35, and xiv., xv., xvi., xvii.

With reverent reluctance I approach the sacred hour in which Christ, gathering the faithful eleven about him, discourses to them of the most sacred experiences in the divine life, and in the only recorded prayer of any length opens his heart to them in opening it to his Father. If space permitted, I should prefer simply to print this discourse and prayer, in perhaps slightly different form from that of our English Bible; but I must content myself with endeavoring in an abbreviated paraphrase to indicate its great truths, conscious how imperfectly I understand Him, and how imperfectly I must interpret even my own understanding.

The shadow of impending death was falling upon the group. At last even they began to comprehend. With but the vaguest hope of immortality, with a half-pagan faith in a Hades in which the dead waited in shadowy forms for a future resurrection, death could not but be to them, what, alas! it still remains to most of us, the great separation. Jesus, with that genius of sympathy so characteristic of him, begins by entering into this "horror of a great darkness" which is beginning to settle down upon them. But he enters bearing the light of a bright hope.

Do not think, he says, that this beautiful world is the only abode of the living. God has in his universe many dwelling-places. I am going to prepare a dwelling-place for you, and will return again and take you to myself to be with me. And do you not at last begin to understand who I am?—the revelation of the Father, the One in whom he dwells and by whom he is made known to you. No longer shall I be with you on the earth; but another Strength-giver shall be at your side to answer to your call.[1] He

[1] Comforter is strength-giver. The original, "Paraclete," means one who comes at another's call.

will ever dwell with you; unseen by the world and therefore by the world unknown? but not to you unknown; for he will dwell within you. And in Him I shall be with you, the life of your life. How? That I cannot explain to you; only this I can say, If you love me, you will keep my commandments; and if you love me and keep my commandments, you will know this experience of the indwelling of the Divine Spirit. He will bring you light, peace, courage, and joy.

I in Him, He in me, we in all my disciples—this will make them all one; a vine—each disciple a branch kept alive by dwelling in me, kept in unity with the other branches because they all thus dwell in me. Thus I shall still dwell in the world, incarnate in my disciples, who are my Church, and who, however different their religious forms, are one in their love and loyalty and their fellowship with me. The life of this Church is love, and its fruit is love—the consciousness of my love, and of my Father's love, and the spirit of love toward one another; love as I have illustrated it, love that lays down life for others, love in self-sacrifice. But this love the world does not and will not understand. It has repaid my love with hate. It will repay yours with hate. Do not imagine that love always kindles love, nor be amazed when hate and bitter persecution come.

I am going away, and you are, I see, filled with sorrow. But it is for your benefit I am going. If I were in the body, you could not receive that higher inspiration which comes from a bodiless, invisible, spiritual Presence. The Spirit will come: He will make the world see that it was sinful, or it would not have rejected such an One as I; He will make the world understand righteousness, for after I am gone it will begin to study my character, as it will not and cannot while I am here; He will make the world understand the principles of divine judgment, for it will see what value to put on the religion which builds synagogues and conducts sacrificial services, but crucifies Love. And He will be your Teacher; and you will be wiser for my going, and will understand me better. Your sorrow will become a bitter anguish; I know that; but it will be the anguish of travail, out of which will be born a new-created world. For sorrow is the mother of joy. So sorrow and joy

will go together in your life: sorrow in the world, joy in me. But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

If reverence hesitates to interpret Christ's most sacred discourse, it may well hesitate still more to interpret his prayer. I shall here only suggest to the reader two or three reflections concerning it.

What is commonly known as the Lord's Prayer is not a true interpretation of Christ's spiritual desires for his disciples. The Twelve came to him early in his ministry for a ritual. He gave them a prayer which, with wonderful simplicity and brevity, summed up the common desires, I will not say of humanity, rather of the devout Jew. These were desires for the coming of the kingdom, for daily bread, for forgiveness of sin, for guidance in a safe and peaceful life, and for deliverance from the Evil One. But when in this last interview with his disciples he poured out his own heart in prayer for his disciples, his petitions took on, not only a different form, but a different character. He does not pray for the coming of the kingdom, for it has already come; it is in the hearts of his loyal followers. He does not ask for daily bread; he cares very little for comfortable maintenance here below. Nor for forgiveness; his disciples are already forgiven, reconciled unto the Father, their sins blotted out, and they in filial fellowship with their God. He does not ask for a safe and peaceful guidance from all temptation; on the contrary, he says expressly that he does not desire to take his loved ones out of the world—the hating, persecuting, tempting world. There is but one petition common to both prayers—the prayer of the devout Jew and the prayer of the Lord for his own—the petition, Deliver us from the Evil One. Thus this prayer begins where the earlier prayer ends; and it goes on to present three other petitions for the disciples throughout all time: Sanctification and consecration unto and in the truth; the perfect unity of love, in God and with one another; and spiritual appreciation of and participation in the glory of the Father and the Son—the glory of love, service, and self-sacrifice, the glory manifested in the passion and death of the Christ.

CHAPTER XXXIX.—GETHSEMANE

Mark xiv., 32–52

Christ's last discourse to his disciples ended, he left the room where they had been gathered and went with them out of the Temple gate—the same he had entered four days before in triumph—crossed the brook Kedron, and found in one of the gardens which covered the slope of the Mount of Olives a quiet retreat. We may well believe that it was a favorite spot with him, and one where he was accustomed to seek, sometimes absolute solitude, sometimes that opportunity for quiet converse with his disciples which the crowded city refused him. The moon was at its full, and its rays, struggling through the heavy foliage of the vines and olive-trees which constituted the roof of his rural sanctuary, filled it with those shadows which at once add to the solemnity and minister to the sorrow of such an hour. The garden was probably known to Judas as a probable place in which to find Jesus; the events of the night justify this supposition. Christ guarded against surprise. Taking his three most trusted friends, he bade them watch as sentinels while he, withdrawing from them, gave himself to prayer. Often in Galilee had he left them sleeping in their burnooses upon the ground, or in some hospitable hamlet, while he went up to one of the neighboring hilltops to pray; but never before had it been necessary to protect his devotions from hostile intrusion. What would have occurred, what change in the course and effect of his ministry would have been produced, had they been faithful to their trust and warned him of the traitor's approach, who can tell? Certain it is that, humanly speaking, Christ's arrest at that time, and all the events which followed, were due to their failure to keep watch while their Master prayed. I note the fact, leaving the reader to reflect upon its significance and to consider whether its analogue is not to be

found more than once in the subsequent history of the Christian Church.

I shall make no attempt in this paper to penetrate the sacred reserve which the simple Gospel narrative has thrown about that hour of prayer. Into the scene from which the beloved disciple was excluded we may well hesitate to enter. But enough of that hour of mystery and struggle has been recorded to made a few reflections clear—reflections worthy our frequent pondering, simple and self-evident though they be. The sufferer looked forward with clear vision and inexpressible dread upon the awful events of the morrow. His was not a stoic's nature; it was sensitive to the physical pain, and still more to the storm of hate and execration which was to break upon him, and to the personal shame and indignity which he was to endure. "Father," he cried, "if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." It was possible; he knew that it was possible; but possible only by the abandonment of his life purpose; and that he would not abandon. Apparently he had but to choose to escape and the way of escape would be opened to him. For even with the guards closing around him, he said to Peter: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" But, as a captain will not desert his sinking ship, nor a general his defeated army, in order to save himself, even though treachery has brought wreck to the one or ruin to the other, so Christ would not desert humanity, nor seek escape by any method which did not bring deliverance to the whole race. Shrink as he might from the hour of crucifixion, he never thought of escaping it by recreant flight. Always his prayer came back to the one culminating petition: "Thy will, not mine, be done." This is more than resignation. To be resigned is to accept, without complaining, the inevitable will of God. Christ prayed that God's will might be accomplished. His supreme desire was that his own desire might not countervail his Father's wiser, stronger purpose. Gethsemane gives a sublime but awful interpretation to the so often carelessly uttered petition, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." It is in turn itself interpreted by the lines of Faber:

> God's will is sweetest to him when
> It triumphs at his cost.

The struggle was real; but in a soul whose supreme desire is to know and do God's will, the issue of such a struggle is never doubtful.

Twice Christ comes to his disciples. Is it for their sympathy? or is it to ascertain whether they are watching? Does his careful love admonish him to take these precautions that they may not share his arrest and peril? The first time he awakes them. The second time he leaves them sleeping undisturbed. At length he sees from his shadowed retreat the light of torches gleaming across the intervening valley, and hears the measured tread which tokens the advance of soldiers. Even now he might have escaped and left the slumberous disciples to their fate. But this does not even seem to occur to him. He goes forth hurriedly, awakens his recreant watch with a sentence whose reproach they could never have forgotten — "Sleep on now, and take your rest;" and then, with a word of warning which thoroughly arouses them and drives all sleep from their heavy eyes, "The Son of man is betrayed into the hands of men; arise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me," he leaves them to come to their startled senses, pushes by them, and by the eight who from their sleep on the ground a little beyond are struggling into consciousness, and puts himself between his friends and the temple guard led by the traitor Judas. The latter greets his Master with a kiss, but even his effrontery can find no response to the rebuke which reveals to all Christ's understanding of the traitor's treachery. The guard, startled by the sudden apparition, and yielding, as more than once before mobs had yielded, to his divine dignity, fall backward before him. The disciples, inspired by a tardy loyalty and a false expectation of a supernatural deliverance, are eager to follow up the advantage and effect a rescue. Peter does not wait for permission—his sword flashes out of his scabbard in a futile and foolish act of resistance. Christ forbids all violence, bids Peter put up his sword, asks of his captors but one favor, that his disciples be suffered to depart unmolested, then surrenders himself into the guards' hands, and is bound and led away. Judas, with a shamed and heavy heart, accompanies the band to the court whose condemnation of Christ is his own severe condemnation. Of the eleven disciples

nine flee away. Hiding in the dark shadows of the trees and beneath the overhanging houses of the streets, two of them furtively creep after the prisoner and his guard. They are Peter and John, determined to see the final issue of this fearful night.

CHAPTER XL.—THE COURT OF CAIAPHAS

John xviii., 12–24; Mark xiv., 55–72; Luke xxii., 66–71; Matt. xxvii., 3–10

It was not far from four o'clock in the morning of the seventh day of April, in the thirty-fourth year of the Christian era, when the Sanhedrim convened in the council chamber adjoining the Temple for the most momentous state trial history has ever recorded.[1] The court sat in a semicircle. In the center sat the high priest. If he was robed on that night as he was on ordinary great trials, he wore a blue turban interwoven with gold, a blue robe with a girdle of purple, scarlet and gold embroidery about his waist, with onyx stones for buttons, and with a breastplate rich and radiant with jewels. Two scribes sat at the two ends of the semicircle—one to take down the testimony for the accused, the other the testimony for the prosecution. No lawyers were allowed for the defense; the accused must defend himself. He stood before them, pale, emaciated, weary with the night's watching, but strong with that calm dignity before which only an hour earlier the guard had fallen backward to the ground; before which only a few hours later Pilate, the Roman, was to tremble.

In the sixteenth century, at the time when the Pope of Rome claimed the allegiance of the English people, it was made a capital offense for any man in England to attempt to divert the allegiance of the English people from the English King. So, centuries before, it had been made a capital offense for any man to attempt to divert the allegiance of the Jewish people from Jehovah, who was their King. It was because of this law that it was a capital offense to practice witchcraft or sorcery, or to prophesy in

[1] There had been a preliminary informal and quite irregular examination of the prisoner at the house of Annas. It was here that Peter's denial of his Master took place. From this examination Christ was conducted to the council chamber for the formal trial.

the name of any other God than Jehovah, or to pretend to work miracles in the name of another, or to speak in God's name what God had not ordered to be spoken, or to practice idolatry, or to urge the people themselves to practice it.[1] It was under these statutes in the Old Testament that Jesus Christ was put on trial. Although the historians have kept no accurate record of the indictment, it is easy for us to frame it. We have only to go to subsequent rabbinical authorities and see what charges they have brought against him.

"Jesus, son of Joseph, thou art accused of having conspired against the government and endeavoring to usurp the crown of Israel; confess thy crime, and acknowledge thyself guilty of treason. Charges are also made against thee that thou hast deceived and imposed upon the people, making them believe all manner of superstitions, and telling them that thou canst work miracles, and that the whole world of demons and spirits is under thy control. Thou knowest it is strictly forbidden in the law of Moses to resort to enchantments or divinations, or to consult with spirits; now, therefore, take heed, give glory to God, Lord God of Israel, and plead guilty to the charges made against thee. If thou hadst merely slandered the banner-bearers of Israel and endeavored to break the pillars of our religion, we could have extended to thee pardon, hadst thou repented—truly, sincerely repented before God and Israel; but as thou hast repeatedly said to the people, 'No man knows the Father but the Son, and to whomsoever the Son will reveal him,' such a heresy cannot be pardoned, but must be expiated by severe punishment—even by death. Thou knowest it is recorded in the Bible, 'And there shall not arise any prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord shall know face to face.' Art thou greater than Moses, the father of all prophets? Canst or didst thou give us a better or a clearer knowledge of our heavenly Father? Thou, who wast conceived in sin and born in iniquity, darest to call thyself the Son of God, and lead the people astray, and persuade them to worship thee, as if thou wert indeed of the Almighty. Oh, blasphemy! blasphemy! Thou art a false prophet, and, according to the sacred law

[1] See Exod. xxi, 20; Lev. xx., 1-5; Deut. xiii.; xvii., 2-5; xviii., 9-22: Lev. xix., 31.

of Moses, thou hast forfeited thy life—thou must suffer the punishment of being stoned. Hast thou anything to offer for thy defense? If so, state it without restraint at once, and bring forward such proof as thou mayst have to sustain thine assertions of innocence."

This indictment, which I transfer to these pages from a modern Jewish life of Christ,[1] is not a historical representation of the indictment actually presented in the Court of Caiaphas, but it may be assumed to be a true transcript of its essential charges and to be conceived in its spirit.

It is easy for us also to imagine the evidence gathered against him. It could be proved that he had claimed to be king; that he had proclaimed laws as a lawgiver; that he had set himself above those of olden time, saying, "It has been said to you of olden time, but I say unto you;" that he had entered Jerusalem riding in triumph as a king, and that when men had cried out before him, "Hosanna, hosanna, to him that cometh in the name of the Lord," and he had been called upon to rebuke them, he had refused so to do. It could be proved that he had worked miracles in his own name, though no prophet had ever done so; that he had prophesied in his own name, and had claimed even to forgive sins in his own name. And yet such had been the reserve of Jesus that it could not be proved that he had claimed distinctively divine character. We know now what his claims had been in the secret councils of his own disciples; but these were then to the public unknown. Evil spirits had undertaken to bear testimony, but he had silenced them. The men he cured would have borne testimony, but he forbade them. With a wise caution born of foresight he had guarded against this hour. Witness after witness was brought—false witnesses, too, perjured witnesses; but in their testimony they agreed not with one another. There was, indeed, that traitor Judas, who might have been summoned to tell what had been spoken in the secret councils, but under the Jewish law one witness was not enough to condemn to death, and Judas Iscariot's testimony unsupported by other testimony would have been without avail.

The morning sun was creeping up the east. The golden glory of the coming day was flooding the council chamber.

[1] Goldstein's "Life of Jesus of Nazareth."

The priests and scribes began to fear that their victim would escape them, and that they would be unable to bring such testimony as would sustain a conviction of blasphemy even in that packed tribunal. At last the High Priest ventured on a bold experiment. He put Jesus Christ himself on the witness-stand. He administered the Jewish oath: "I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou art the Son of God." Jesus interposed his remonstrance: "If I tell you," he said, "you will not believe. If I question you, you will not answer. If I should prove my innocence, you would not let me go." Still the High Priest persisted: "I adjure thee that thou tell us by the living God whether thou be the Messiah." Jesus might have refused to answer, but he did not. "Thou shalt see," he said, "the Son of man coming in the clouds of glory to judge the world. The relations between me and you will be reversed. You will stand before my judgment bar. I will sit upon the judgment throne." The priest again persisted in his demand: "Art thou indeed the Son of God?" Jesus answered with a clear, ringing, simple statement: "I am." One may imagine the hush that fell upon the court and the crowd outside looking in through the windows for the moment, as the High Priest rent his clothes, which the High Priest was accustomed to do on conviction of blasphemy and in token of his judgment, as the English judge puts the black cap on his head when he pronounces sentence of death. And the whole court, waiting not for the secret ballot required by the Jewish law, cried out: "He is guilty of death, he is guilty of death!"

Our Christian faith, that faith which the great Evangelical Church of Christendom holds, in the divine character of Jesus of Nazareth, does not depend upon any interweaving of texts of Scripture nor upon any doubtful deductions. In this supreme and awful moment of his life, when he stood face to face with death, under the solemn sanction of his oath, when he was under the highest obligation to sweep away misconstructions and misapprehensions if they existed—in that great hour he swore, before that court and high heaven, that he was the Son of God and the Judge of humanity. If he was not God's well-beloved Son, he was rightly adjudged guilty of blasphemy.

Says Judge Greenleaf, Professor in Harvard Law School

at the time of his death: "If we regard Jesus simply as a Jewish citizen, and with no higher character, his conviction seems substantially right in point of law, though the trial was not legal in all its forms. For, whether the accusations were founded on the first or second commands in the Decalogue, or on the law laid down in the thirteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, or that in the eighteenth chapter and twentieth verse, he had violated them all by assuming to himself powers belonging alone to Jehovah; and even if he were recognized as a prophet of the Lord, he was still obnoxious to punishment, under the decision in the case of Moses and Aaron, before cited. It is not easy to perceive on what ground his conduct could have been defended before any tribunal, unless upon that of his superhuman character. No lawyer, it is conceived, would think of placing his defense on any other basis." [1]

This is the ground of our faith in Jesus as the Divine Son of God. In this supreme hour of his life, when the claim meant death to himself, when, if it were false, it meant falsity running through all human history and to all time, he claimed divinity under the solemn sanction of his oath and in the presence of eternity. There is no room to build a tomb to Jesus of Nazareth beside the tomb of Confucius of China, Buddha of India, Socrates of Greece. He was either less than a philosopher or more than a man. He was either the Son of God or to be acquitted of blasphemy only by being regarded as an enthusiast. He was either undeserving of our confidence or entitled to the highest loyalty and allegiance that human hearts can give him.

[1] "Examination of the Testimony of the Four Evangelists; with an Account of the Trial of Jesus." By Simon Greenleaf, LL.D.

CHAPTER XLI.—THE TRIAL BEFORE PILATE

John xviii., 28–38; xix., 4–16; Luke xxiii., 6–12; Matt. xxvii., 15–31

Jesus had been pronounced worthy of death by the Jewish tribunal. But they could not execute their sentence. It was necessary to secure the ratification of it from Pilate, who was at once Governor and Judge of Judea.

The Temple at Jerusalem was built upon a broad platform of rock overlooking the deep ravine upon the east, and separated by another deep ravine from the palace, once of Solomon, now of Herod, upon the west. Close adjoining this Temple there had been built by Pilate a great tower, with four walled towers at its four corners. It was at once a Roman garrison and a Roman Governor's palace. Its broad halls were almost as wide as the Jewish streets, and its abundant rooms furnished a resting-place for five hundred soldiers, besides the rooms for the Roman Governor. At about six o'clock in the morning of the 7th of April in the year of our Lord 34, Pilate, resting in his palace in this tower of Antonia, was aroused by turbulent sounds in the street below. He was used to the turbulence of the Jewish people. Their passions, their superstitions, their patriotism, and their prejudices had been aroused by the priesthood to insurrection against the Roman authority, and once and again he had entered into conflict with that same priesthood, stirring up that same people, and had been compelled, by fear of their violence, to withdraw, humiliated and defeated, from the controversy. He hastened down, stepped out on to the broad space that led directly into the Temple courts, down which more than once the Roman soldiery had issued to quell disturbances in the courts of the Jewish Temple, and there saw a great multitude, already growing into a mob. It filled the broad court of the Temple and ran out into the streets that led back to the Temple courts, and men were hurrying from different parts of the city to increase it. Before him stood a

few of the priesthood, whom he hated, and in their midst a single figure, pale, wearied with the night's watching, with some of the signs of the ignominy and shame that had already been heaped upon him. His hands were bound behind his back; but something in his face and figure, something in the soul that looked through his eyes, made itself felt even in the heart of the hard, unemotional Roman. The Governor asked the priesthood what they wanted. "We have found this fellow guilty," they said, "and we have condemned him to death. We ask authority to execute the death sentence." "Take him," said Pilate, "and judge him according to your law." "We have done so already, but it is not permitted to us to execute death sentence, and he is worthy of death. If he were not guilty, we would not have condemned him." "I am not so sure of that," said Pilate. "What has he done?" The very refusal of Pilate to ratify unquestioningly the sentence which the Sanhedrim had pronounced against Jesus raised an issue which the priesthood were unwilling to raise, and yet of which they made effective use. The people of Judea were restless under the yoke of pagan authority, wrathful that the authority had passed from their hands into the hands of a hated pagan, angered that they could not carry into instant execution, without appeal to a foreign power, the sentence of their own supreme court, maddened that in the very moment of their triumph their way was apparently blocked. It was easy to lash such a people into a threatening mob. The priests, too, had prepared themselves for this exigency. They knew that Pilate would condemn no man for blasphemy, and they proceeded with a new accusation. "We have found this fellow," they said, "perverting the people. He has claimed to be a king. He has set himself up against Cæsar. We demand his death."

It is not difficult for us to imagine with what evidence they endeavored to sustain this new accusation. He *had* claimed to be a King; had assumed all the prerogatives of royalty; had demanded absolute and supreme allegiance from his followers; had promulgated laws; had announced himself the supreme and final Judge of mankind; had organized in the heart of Cæsar's province the germ of an imperishable community; had marched into

Jerusalem attended by a multitude which hailed him "King of the Jews." His little body-guard were armed with swords, and his arrest had been finally accomplished only despite violent resistance. It is true that the legislation which Jesus had promulgated was for the government of the individual, not for the regulation of a political community; that he had steadfastly refused to arbitrate in civil disputes, or to act as judge in enforcing civil law; that first among the precepts for the government of his spiritual community was that of unconditional non-resistance; that he had repeatedly cautioned the enthusiastic multitude that his kingdom was not of this world, and would not immediately appear; and that the resistance which a single misguided follower had offered to his arrest was instantly rebuked, and its evil effects miraculously cured. The charge that Jesus forbade to give tribute to Cæsar was not only wholly false, but in direct contradiction to the facts. But, by misrepresenting much that Jesus had said, adding something and suppressing more—a method not unknown to modern priestcraft in ecclesiastical controversies—it was not difficult to present a case that really demanded of the Procurator official investigation. He therefore assumed jurisdiction of the case, summoned Jesus within the fortress for a quieter examination, and asked him for an explanation of these charges. Jesus would not defend himself before a dishonest tribunal. But to the Procurator, ignorant alike of the character and mission of Jesus and really perplexed, Jesus readily vouchsafed the explanation he requested, in a few brief but significant words, whose meaning a paraphrase may help to make clear. He was a King, but he was no preacher of sedition. He had formed no purpose of interfering with the government of Rome. He had no need to call witnesses. His accusers were his witnesses. Who had brought this accusation against him? The Jews. If it had been preferred by a Roman centurion, it might have been worthy of examination. But when was it ever known that the Jewish priesthood complained to their Gentile government of one who sought the political emancipation of the nation? None knew better than Pilate how restive were the people under the Roman yoke. The voices of the mob before the judgment-seat crying out for Jesus's

blood were unwitting witnesses of his innocence. He was a King, but his kingdom was not of this world—was not formed on the principles nor maintained by the methods of political empires. If it had been, then surely from among the hundreds who only four days before had accompanied him to Jerusalem, hailing him as their monarch, some would have been found ready to defend his person with their lives. Not to found a new dynasty, not to frame a new political organization, had Christ come into the world, but to bear witness to the truth. His subjects swear allegiance only to the truth—to Jesus, because Jesus is the truth. And they only to whom truth is of higher worth than all else comprehend his voice and participate in his kingdom. Pilate, half pityingly, half contemptuously, replied with his famous question, "What is truth?" To this Roman realist, knowing only kingdoms that are built by the sword and cemented by blood, this conception of an invisible kingdom of truth seemed but the baseless vision of a religious enthusiast. But though he lacked moral, he did not lack political, penetration. It was clear this Galilean rabbi was no rival to the Cæsars. The suspicions which he had from the first entertained of the motives of his old-time enemies were confirmed, and from this brief interview he returned to the accusers of Jesus to announce his judgment of acquittal.

Then commenced the battle which waged for certainly an hour or more, and ended as all such battles between unscrupulous persistence and cowardly compromises must. Consider the three figures in this battle: the priesthood, resolute, earnest, determined, clamorous, inciting the gathering mob that they might wrest from the unwilling judge the condemnation which they could not expect from his conscience or his judgment; the prisoner, calm, unmoved, silent through all the false accusations, interposing to them nothing but a solemn and witnessing silence; and Pilate—man of the world; Roman, who believed neither in God nor in immortality; whose moral sense had in it no religious inspiration, behind it no religious sanction; whose only support in an hour of trial was the sense of honor that is so much vaunted and is so feeble; a man who would have resented with wrathful indignation the charge of cowardice, and yet proved himself a coward; not inhuman;

not cruel; not meaning to be apostate; not conscious of the great crime he was really about to commit. Let us not misjudge him. He was a judge. There stood before him one whom he regarded as a mild, harmless religious enthusiast. Prejudice had been aroused against him. Should he let this man go, there would certainly arise a riot in Jerusalem, the rumor of which might reach the Court of Rome, and might bring trouble upon him, certainly would bring trouble upon the nation. Should he execute him—only one more harmless enthusiast out of existence. No great harm done. So he reasons; and, so reasoning, palters with the mob. His quick ear catches the suggestion that this man is a Galilean. He sends him across the ravine to Herod, hoping thus to get rid of him. He appeals to the patriotism of the people. "Your King! shall I crucify him?" He endeavors by various devices to appeal to the sympathies of a mob that have no sympathies. One thing he does not do. He does not say to that gathering mob, "Though the heavens fall, justice shall be done. Though he that stands before me is but a weak enthusiast, without friends, though his execution can do no harm, and his deliverance may do much injury, still I will do justice, come what may." And when, at last, the high priests hiss in his ears, "This man made himself a king; and he that lets a claimant to the throne go free is no friend of Tiberius Cæsar," he resists their demand no longer. When his imagination calls up the picture of that most jealous and cruel monarch on the throne of the Cæsars, when he remembers that his own place may be swept from under him at the demand of this same priesthood, enforced by this same mob, he washes his hands of responsibility and delivers the innocent One to death.

"And they took Jesus and led him away."

CHAPTER XLII.—THE CRUCIFIXION

Mark xv., 21–41; Luke xxiii., 26–49; John xix., 17–37

Among all the dreadful deaths which the cruelty of man has invented wherewith to express his thirst for human unhappiness, his greed of revenge and hate, none surpasses in cruelty crucifixion. Even in the hard and cruel age to which it belongs, even among the unsympathetic, cold, and remorseless Romans, it was accounted cruel beyond all reason and measure, reserved for slaves, for specially obnoxious criminals, or for those who were the victims of malice in remote provinces. The victim of the crucifixion was nailed to the cross, sometimes partly nailed and partly tied to it. Then he was left to hang there, no vital organ affected, only wounds in the hands and feet, the hot sun beating down upon his naked head and body, impossible to move, hot, feverish pains running through every nerve, currents of blood flowing with almost bursting rapidity in the arteries, no power of cooling the fevered brow, no power to move the anguished body. So he hung, always for hours, often for days, before death mercifully came to release him, unless the wearied executioners, fatigued by the watching, broke the legs or pierced the side of the criminal, and so gave him escape from his torture. It was to this death Christ was condemned, by the clamor of the very people whom he had come to save, by the clamor of the very nation whom he loved with all the patriotic devotion of one who was by birth and by education a Jew, with all the sympathetic love of a human heart that beat with love as never human heart has beat before or since, with all the larger love that was enshrined in a heart divine.

From Pilate's judgment-seat the procession moved forward to the place of execution. Three prisoners marched with it, guarded by a Roman soldiery under the command of a Roman centurion. Each of the condemned bore, as was the custom of the age, his cross. Jesus, wearied with

the night's watching—never, from other indications of the Gospel, it would appear, physically strong—seems to have sunk beneath the weight of his cross. The soldiers seized upon a peasant coming into the city, impressed him into their service, and made him carry the cross for the Nazarene. It was accounted afterwards for his honor in the Church; and the sons of this Simon that bore the cross of Jesus to Golgotha were known in the subsequent history for that simple involuntary service of their father.

There was in Jerusalem at this time an organization of women, the germ of those subsequent philanthropic organizations which have been formed to mitigate the sufferings of humanity. Delegations and representatives of this society were accustomed to come to the place of execution when Jews were condemned to death, to mourn for the condemned, and to do what little in them lay both to comfort and alleviate. Some of these women followed the procession which wound slowly down the hill toward the place where the execution was to take place. In accordance with the custom of the Orient, they beat upon their breasts, tore their garments and their hair, and showed all those ostentatious signs of sorrow so characteristic of that age, but which Christ with difficulty could endure. He turned to them and said, "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children." Christ's crucifixion is not to awaken in us pity for the crucified.

They reach the place of execution. The anæsthetic agents known in our time were not, indeed, then known; but something like them had been invented to dull the senses and alleviate pain in the hours of great agony. These women had brought some wine mingled with myrrh for that purpose.[1] If Christ would but take it, the bitterness of death would be at least lightened in these last hours. They offered it to him. He recognized in the bitter myrrh the object for which it was given him, shook his head, and turned away. He would not enter the gates of death with dulled senses.

The cross was laid upon the ground. He, silent and unresisting, was laid upon it. Nails were driven through the hands and feet; and then the cross was raised to its

[1] See Edersheim's "Life of Christ," II., 590; Lightfoot's "Horæ Hebraiacæ" on Matt. xxvii., 34, and John xix., 29.

place with a wrench that sent agony tingling through the veins and nerves of the body and that wrung from him a cry for mercy, not for himself, but for others: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

The Roman soldiers sat down at the foot of the cross. One of them took some dice out of his pocket. Another produced a bottle of cheap sour wine. Then, beneath the shadow of the cross, with the blood trickling down from the burning arms and feet of the Crucified, they drank and gambled for the garment of the One who died to save them.[1]

The hill where the crucifixion took place was upon one of the highways that led to Jerusalem, and pilgrims passing stopped to look at the scene, then joined with the chief priests in their taunts to the dying One. Two brigands—sharers, probably, in that insurrection which Barabbas had set on foot—were crucified, one on either side of Christ. One of them joined in the taunts of the multitude; the other, touched by something in the power and presence of the dying One, rebuked his companion, then turned to Jesus with the cry, "Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom," and received the answer, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

Among the groups about the cross was one standing a little apart—John, the most loving, and also the most courageous, and Christ's mother, watching to the last, unable to relieve, but unable to go away till all was over. In broken accents Christ addresses them. "Mother," he said, "Mother, look! thy son. Son, look! thy mother." It was enough. From that day forth the disciple whom Christ loved became the guardian of the mother whom Christ loved.

It was between twelve and three o'clock in the afternoon when murky and waterless clouds began to overcast the horizon and fill all the air with that strange, mysterious, and awful silence which presages an earthquake. The birds hushed their singing and fled to their nests. The lamps were lighted in the Temple at Jerusalem. The darkness grew so dense that men and women hurried to their homes, wondering what was to come. In this hour

[1] The "vinegar" referred to in John xix., 29, etc., is the *posca* or mixture of sour wine or vinegar and water which the Roman soldiers were accustomed to drink. See Thayer's "Lexicon of New Testament" under ὄξος (oxos).

of darkness the Father seemed to have left his well-beloved Son, and when this sense of intolerable desolation came over him, it wrung from his lips the cry, "Eloi, eloi, lama sabacthani"—My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Yet even then he did not forsake his God. It was not "God, God!" but "*My* God, *My* God!" Still he clung to the Father who seemed for the moment even to his shattered faith to have flung him off. The burning fever that scorched his brain and parched his lips wrung from him the cry, "I thirst." One of the bystanders, probably one of the soldiers, ran, and, dipping a sponge in the sour wine they were drinking, lifted it to his lips; but some of the others, callous to the last, scornfully intervened. They pretended to misunderstand his prayer as a cry to Elijah for help. "Let him alone," said they; "let us see if Elijah will deliver him."

But at the same moment came the deliverance from his Father. He perceived the answer, and cried with a loud, strong voice, "It is finished." And then, as though in that very hour of entreaty to his Father he heard the Father's response, he breathed forth his final prayer, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit," his head dropped upon his bosom, and he was gone. A little later the Roman soldiers came that way with orders to hasten the death of the three condemned. They broke the legs of the two malefactors. To their surprise, Jesus was already dead; but one of them, to make sure of it, with brutal celerity characteristic of the Roman, plunged his short spear into the crucified side, and out gushed blood and water to bear its conclusive witness to the reality of his death.

Gérôme's picture of the crucifixion represents the soldiery and the chief priests returning to the city, and only the shadows of the cross are seen upon the ground. I seek here, not to paint the crucifixion, but simply to point to the shadows which it casts. Velasquez represents the crucifixion of Jesus in the hour of death. The head has fallen forward, and the long hair fallen over the face veils the features from our sight. So here, with hesitating pen, I seek to represent our dying Lord—his anguish veiled, his love revealed, in this his supreme self-sacrifice for love's sake.

CHAPTER XLIII.—THE RESURRECTION MORNING

Mark xvi., 1–8; John xx., 1–18; Matt. xxviii., 1–15

The disciples were heartbroken at the death of Christ. They had never understood his prophecies of either his crucifixion or his resurrection. Nor is this strange. Christ was accustomed to talk to them in parables and metaphors. He was a poet. They were plain, prosaic men who could not understand metaphors. His intensity of nature, his spiritual vision, his transcendent teaching, often puzzled and perplexed them. When he meant to be taken literally, they thought he was talking parables. When he was talking parables, they took him literally. He cautioned them against the leaven of the Pharisees. They thought it was because they had no bread. He told them that the time of conflict was coming and they must be prepared for it. They produced in exultation a couple of swords. When he told them that the kingdom of God was at hand, they expected his coronation and enthronement, and asked for the best places on his right hand and on his left. On the other hand, when he told them that he was going away, and they knew whither he was going and the way, they replied that they did not know. When he said, "A little while and ye shall not see me, and a little while and ye shall see me," they said to one another, "What is this little while? We cannot understand what he is talking about." So when he told them that the Son of man would be crucified, and would be raised from the dead again the third day, they thought that this was one of his metaphors, his parables. They did not comprehend it.

His death, therefore, left them without hope. The women weeping at the tomb had love for him still, but no hope of his reappearance and little faith in his Messiahship. We had trusted, said the disciples, that this had been he

which should have redeemed Israel. This is the language of men who trust thus no longer. Faith was dead; hope was dead; only love lived: and love without faith and hope is anguish.

The incidents of the resurrection morn it is not altogether easy to bring together into a connected narrative. No one evangelist gives more than a partial account of the resurrection events, and there are naturally discrepancies between these partial and incomplete narratives. But there are no contradictions—that is, no statements by one writer irreconcilable with the statements of other writers—and no differences, I believe, after a careful study of the narratives, which might not be readily harmonized if we knew all the facts.

Several women (the exact number is not known) go early in the morning of the first day of the week to the sepulcher. Their purpose is to complete the anointing of the body of their Lord, which was left incomplete when darkness overtook the sad group on Friday night. How they can get into the tomb is a perplexity to them, for the door is closed by a heavy stone which they have not the strength to roll away. When they reach the tomb, behold, the stone has been rolled away. They enter into the sepulcher; an angelic messenger there assures them that Christ is risen, and bids them go and tell the disciples, and especially Peter, of the fact. They hasten with their news, but the disciples do not believe them. Mere women's tales this story of a resurrection appears to the fishermen disciples. Two of them, however, are sufficiently stirred by the story to return with one of the women to the grave. When they reach the sepulcher and look in and see that it is empty, and see that the grave-clothes are still there, not left in disorder, but neatly folded and put in place, there flashes into the intuitive mind of John the meaning of Christ's prophecies; and he saw, it is said, and believed. Mary, overwhelmed with grief at the helplessness of their situation; Mary, who has not yet taken in the truth of the resurrection, and thinks that the Lord's tomb has been robbed and the Lord's body borne away to some dishonored grave, remains weeping, and is accosted by some one whom she believes to be the gardener until he pronounces her name in the familiar accents of her Master.

This identifies him, and she hastens back to Jerusalem to confirm the tidings before brought of the resurrection.[1]

Meanwhile the soldiers have made their report to the chief priests, and have been bribed to start the story which is subsequently found in Jewish traditions, that the grave has been rifled by the disciples—a story which, however, has no standing to-day even in the tribunals of skepticism.

Here we break off the narrative of the resurrection morn, to continue the story next week of the subsequent incidents between the resurrection and the ascension.

[1] This incident, given fully in John xx., 11-18, is probably the one briefly referred to in Matthew xxviii., 9, 10.

CHAPTER XLIV.—FURTHER RESURRECTION APPEARANCES

Luke xxiv., 13–53; John xx., 19–29

The appearances of Jesus Christ to the women and the discovery of the empty tomb by Peter and John had left the disciples in great perplexity. What to make of it all they did not know. The notion of a real resurrection was "too good to be true." The soul does not readily adapt itself to so great a change as was involved in the transition from the despair of Friday night to a faith in a Messiah whom even death could not vanquish. Moreover, as yet, it must be confessed, the report was not sufficiently authenticated. Peter and John had found the grave empty; but it might have been robbed. Mary thought she had seen Christ; but she first thought him to be the gardener, and first thoughts are sometimes the most trustworthy. An angel had told the women that Christ had risen; but an angel's message reported by women did not suffice—can we wonder?—to satisfy the Apostles. Simon Peter said that Christ had appeared to him: this was the best evidence the others had; but Simon Peter was impulsive, ardent, the reverse of cool-blooded and judicial. Could his judgment be depended on? Partly to discuss the events of the past, the present extraordinary conditions, and their plans and purposes for the future, that Sunday evening ten of the disciples met in an upper chamber in Jerusalem. Was it, I wonder, the same chamber where they had that last sad meeting with their Master? The doors were closed, for they justly apprehended some further attack upon them. Judas Iscariot knew their place of meeting, and, if Judas had already committed suicide, it is by no means certain that the others knew of it. They had had more important matters to think about since they had last seen him on that fateful night.

While they were conferring in whispered voices, awe-

stricken, fearful, divided between fear and hope, dreading the Jews, not impossibly suspicious even of one another, since one had already proved a traitor, there came a knocking at the door. It was opened, with what caution we can guess, and there stood two eager and breathless disciples. They brought a strange story to confirm the reports of Simon Peter and the women. They had been going that very evening out to Emmaus, a village of Judea about seven miles distant, when a stranger fell in with them. They were talking over the events of the past few days—who could think or talk of anything else?—when a stranger joined them and asked them what they were talking about. They told him frankly how they had loved Jesus, how they had hoped he was the Messiah, how he had been put to death and their hopes had died with him and been buried in his tomb. The unknown expressed surprise that they so little comprehended the ancient prophecies, and as they walked he interpreted those prophecies to them. Of all the strange silences of Scripture none is stranger to me than this, that neither of these disciples made a record of that conversation and preserved it for future use. What an interpretation of the Old Testament that hour's converse must have given! When they reached their destination, said these two disciples, the stranger was going on, but they persuaded him to accept their hospitality. He did so; the three sat down to the table together; and as he took the bread and broke it and blessed it, they saw in him the person of their Lord. But no sooner had they recognized him than he disappeared as mysteriously as he had appeared; and they, not even waiting to sleep, had hastened back to Jerusalem to bring their confirmation of Christ's resurrection to the others.

While the group were discussing this report, suddenly Jesus appeared among them. How he entered they could not tell. He pronounced on them the benediction of peace, the customary Jewish salutation. He calmed their fears, assuring them that he was no apparition; and, to add assurance to his words, he bade them feel his hands and feet and wounded side, and asked for food, and ate before them all. Then he repeated, in substance, his interpretation of the Old Testament, showing them that his passion and death, so far from being a defeat, was a

fulfillment of the ancient prophecies. Had they comprehended the Scripture, they should have anticipated the crucifixion.

I am glad Thomas was one of the Apostles, and I am glad he was not there that evening. For Thomas was a natural unbeliever. He had plenty of loyalty, but no faith. He was a plain, practical, prosaic man. He was not—one can easily imagine him saying this to himself—he was not a woman to mistake a gardener for a ghost; nor a Peter to jump at conclusions because they agreed with his ardent desires; nor a John to confound the creations of his imagination with the conclusions of his reason. He prided himself on holding that "seeing is believing," and, when the disciples reported that they had seen the Lord, responded curtly that he would believe when he had put his fingers in the nail-prints and thrust his hand in where the spear had been thrust. If that early church had acted on the principle on which some modern defenders of the faith would have us act, they would have excommunicated this unbeliever immediately. But, fortunately for us, they held that nothing is infidelity but unfaithfulness; and this loyal soul—loyal despite his skepticism, loyal to the Master though he despairingly believed him dead—they welcomed as a brother, though he not only doubted, but even stoutly refused to believe in, the resurrection. Fortunate for us, I say, because when the disciples met in the same upper chamber a week later, and Thomas met with them—possibly with a faint glimmer of a hope that the Master would appear to him and put an end to his doubts—He did so appear, and vanquished them by seeming to yield to them. But Thomas did not wait to thrust his finger into the nail-prints or his hand into the side. Love conquered skepticism—it is always love, not argument, that conquers skepticism—and he fell at his Master's feet with a fuller testimony to his divine Messiahship than had ever come from the lips of even Peter or John.

The fact of the resurrection needed no further witness. It was only left to teach its lessons.

CHAPTER XLV.—THE LESSON OF THE RESURRECTION

John xxi., 1–17; Matthew xxviii., 16–20; Luke xxiv., 50–53

The disciples were convinced that death had not extinguished the life of their Master, nor ended his mission; but they were still in perplexity. By his successive reappearances he revealed the reality of his life; but he lived in another, though a seemingly contiguous, world, and came and went mysteriously, always disappearing as suddenly and strangely as he appeared. But he did not take command, and without a commander this little band felt themselves helpless. Galilee was their home; in Galilee they had spent the most joyous hours of their companionship with him; to Galilee he bade them return; and to Galilee they went. Peter's restless spirit forbade him to wait in inactivity for he knew not what. "I am going to resume my fishing," he said. "We will go with thee," said the others.

Fishing, as conducted by these Galilean fishermen, is not sport. It is hard work. On this occasion they toiled all night, and caught nothing. In the early gray of the morning they saw a figure on the shore. The Unknown called out to them: "Have you anything to eat?" "No!" they shouted across the water. "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." They took the hint, cast the net, and found it so full of fish that they could not draw it into the boat. The remembrance of that morning when the Master had similarly enabled them to follow a night of useless toil with a great catch of fish [1] flashed on the mind of John, and he exclaimed to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Peter sprang into the sea and swam ashore, leaving the others to follow in their boat, dragging the net with them. The Unknown had kindled a fire and was cooking some fish on the coals; he had some bread as well, and invited the tired

[1] Luke v., 1–7.

and hungry fishermen to breakfast with him. They knew him; yet, in their awe, dared not question him. Breakfast over, there ensued that ever-memorable colloquy between Christ and Peter. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" "Yea, Lord; thou knowest I have an affection for thee." "Feed my lambs.—Simon, son of Jonas, *lovest* thou me?" "Yea, Lord; thou knowest I have an affection for thee." "Shepherd my sheep.—Simon, son of Jonas, *hast thou affection* for me?" And Peter, it is said, was grieved because the third time Christ said, Hast thou an affection for me? and he answered, humbly but earnestly, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest I have an affection for thee." Jesus said to him, "Feed my little sheep."[1] I do not know where one can find a more beautiful illustration of the nature of Christ's forgiveness—no reproaches for the past, no penances, no probation, no degradation of rank; only a new issuing of the old commission. Love and service—these are the witnesses of repentance; Christ asks no others and will take none less.

A little later he met the eleven again on one of the hilltops of Galilee, and renewed the commission to all. "Go ye," he said, "and disciple all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you every day unto the end of the world."[2] Once again he meets them —in the locality of Bethany, Luke tells us—declines to tell them *when* the kingdom of God will come in power and manifested glory, but bids them go forth to bear witness to him throughout the world, and is then taken up and received by a cloud out of their sight, to appear no more.[3]

The lesson of the resurrection is very plain, and hardly needs the subsequent history of the early Church to emphasize it. Christ has interpreted it by his repeated commissions: "Feed my sheep;" "Disciple all nations;" "Ye shall be my witnesses." We are not to remain at the cross gazing at it. We are not to remain at the tomb weeping.

[1] Two different Greek words are rendered *love* in both the old and the new versions—unfortunately, because an understanding of the difference is absolutely vital to an understanding of the conference.
[2] Matt. xxviii., 16-20.
[3] Luke xxiv., 50-53; Acts. i., 1-11.

We are not to go back to Palestine for a Christ, and seek the living among the dead. We are not to stand gazing up into heaven, or looking forward into the future, wondering when and how he will come again. We are not to waste our time in idle disputations about the nature of his resurrection body—how he could ascend into heaven with flesh and blood? or, if the resurrection was of the "spiritual body," what became of the body of flesh and blood? We are to take the message of the Easter day—Christ is risen; we are to find in it the evidence that he is indeed the Messiah for whom the world has so long been waiting; we are to see in these two events—the crucifixion and the resurrection—the evidence of his love and of his power; and then we are to go forth to bear witness in all the world to both the love and the power, to make disciples of all nations, to teach them who Christ is and what Christianity means, and to feed them on the words, the life, the real and living presence, of the Son of God, the Saviour of mankind.

THE END